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ABSTRACT

This manual is intended to help citizen groups set up their own on-the-job training activities, tailored to their own individual needs, issues, learning styles, and experiences. Specifically, it discusses ways citizens or citizen groups can use the governmental processes to solve social problems and how they can develop clout to hold governmental officials accountable. Section 1 discusses methods to use in defining issues and in developing a theory of the political process. Section 2 discusses ways in which citizens can use traditional and nontraditional strategies to make issues more likely to win. The strategies, each of which is a chapter, include holding agencies accountable, researching elected officials, helping candidates run for office, lobbying, developing initiative and referendum campaigns, and promoting voter registration drives. The exercises in each chapter, which can be duplicated, include success models, a planning guide and/or role plays for practical and immediate use. A list of resources for further study is included at the end. (Author/LD)

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Playing Their Game Our Way

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Using the Political Process to Meet Community Needs

by Greg Speeter

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And most of all, I would like to thank **Sally Habana**-Hafner for helping me meet my deadlines. Without her assistance in both layout and cracking the whip, this manual would never have made it to the printer.

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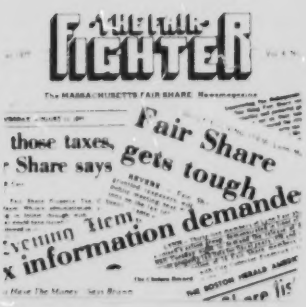

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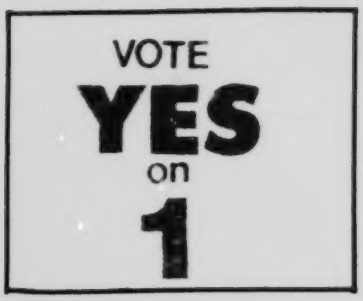

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The Citizen Involvement Training Project

The Citizen Involvement Training Project (CITP) provides training workshops, materials, and consultations to citizen groups throughout Massachusetts. The staff of nine includes specialists in organizing, fund-raising, group process, planning methods, information gathering, social change and adult education, and offers bilingual training as well.

CITP services include workshops and consultation, a 1000 volume Citizen Involvement Library (available to individuals and citizen groups), staff-generated manuals (such as this) and a *Training of Trainers* workshop series intended to help citizen groups establish their own training components in their communities.

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About the CITP Manual Series

Usually, when CITP conducts a workshop for a citizen group, the CITP staff members first sit down with the group to discuss the problem and needs. These initial sessions consist of probing questions which are aimed at helping the group identify root causes as well as immediate, readily apparent problems.

After discussing the problems and needs, the CITP staff and representatives of the group or agency then sit down to design a workshop or workshop series to suit those needs.

This manual, as well as others in the series, is intended to help citizen groups set up their own on-the-job training activities tailored to their individual needs, issues, learning styles and experiences. In writing these manuals we have used what we have learned through our experience with hundreds of citizen groups.

It is hoped that these manuals will be used to help orient new members to an organization, and will be an integral part of membership/staff development.

If you are the one introducing training exercises to your group, you might first spend some time discussing these reluctancies or individual learning preferences. Then again, you may want to let the proof of the pudding rest in the tasting.

About the Exercises

There are several exercises and sections in this manual which you might want to duplicate, reorder to suit your group's needs or use as a smaller, condensed version of a "training workbook" for the entire group.

Whatever way you use the manual, we hope you will tailor it to suit your own needs and learning styles.

About the Use of "He" "She"...etc.

In an effort to overcome the inherent male bias in our English language, the producers of this manual have run up against the cumbersome problem of having to break up the flow of a sentence or train of thought by saying he/she, him/herself, etc. We have, therefore, decided to alternate the use of the personal pronoun throughout the body of the manual: sometimes we call the organizer he, sometimes she. This is not a stylistic mistake, it was purposeful. It is hoped that our culture will devise appropriate pronouns in the future to compensate for the problems currently presented authors and editors (not to mention men and women).

Introduction

A few years ago, a number of us sat around a wood stove and came to the conclusion that the two most dreaded subjects in the world were death and government. Both of them were in the realm of the unknown, and both, no doubt, would "get you" in the end.

Since that discussion, the subject of death has become widely discussed. Researchers have found new evidence of life after death; death may be a pleasant experience, as those who have come closest to it no longer fear it. In fact, many have come to understand and deal with feelings about death.

Most of us, on the other hand, would not be so quick to say that the same has happened for the topic of government. We would point to the fact that less than 54% voted in the last presidential election, and even less in state and local elections, and come to the conclusion that government is a dead topic for most people. We would have as support for that argument the facts that few people know their elected officials and that most people feel that there is very little difference between the two or three people who might run in an election.

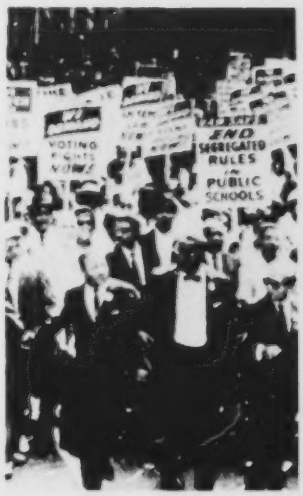
But believe it or not, despite the apparent lack of interest in government by a good number of citizens, despite the perils of Watergate, strangling taxes and unfathomable bureaucracies, there are some people who are saying that we can understand and deal with that other dreaded subject, government. For increasingly, in recent years, some people have managed to find ways to hold government officials accountable to constituents and use the governmental process to begin solving some serious social problems instead of just creating them. In so doing, their theory goes, people will become more interested in the governmental process and will be better able to influence it.

Once one has witnessed and participated in such a process, one begins to see the merit in the theory. Once one begins to see that small and not so small clusters of groups all around the country are having significant successes making government respond to citizen pressures, it becomes apparent that it is worth the participation.

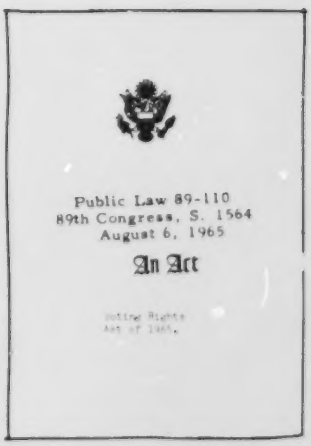
This manual is about how you can use the governmental processes to plan to solve social problems and how you can develop clout to hold elected and appointed officials accountable to carry those plans out.

The need to develop a theory of the political process, as well as to define issues, is emphasized in **Section I**. Also presented in that section are methods to use in developing a theory and issues. No issues can be won without the right political strategies. **Section II** on Practice discusses ways in which a citizen can use traditional and not so traditional strategies to make issues more winnable. The strategies, each of which is a chapter include: holding agencies accountable; doing report cards on officials and agencies; helping candidates run for office; lobbying; developing initiative and referendum campaigns; and promoting voter registration drives. Each chapter includes success models, a planning guide and/or role plays. Chapter 10 is a simulation game for citizen groups. This game provides readers with a chance to practice many of the skills discussed in previous chapters. The final chapter offers a variety of resources which may be helpful as you begin making the government process work for you.

While I feel that the tone of this manual is one of optimism, it is one of cautious optimism. I'm optimistic because I've witnessed or read about some extremely creative and insightful approaches to government. People in all parts of the country have faced up to some tough problems and, in so doing, have shown great amounts of trust in people's ability to decide and act. I'm cautious because it is apparent that the success often doesn't come easy or quickly. Working to make governmental process workable is a long-term committment to a struggle. Responsibility, trust and commitment are concepts we must continue to learn use and teach.



Government—the legal documents, the lawmakers and the agencies—might be looked upon as a giant set of tools. These tools can be used by rulers, to perpetuate their domination, or by the general populace to provide equality and justice. Historically, government has been used by the wealthy to perpetuate their rule and to extract their wealth from the rest of the population. The American colonies broke away from King George III for just this reason, and the United States was founded to change this traditional role of government from protector of the ruling class to protector of the people. But neither the signing of the Declaration of Independence nor the drafting of a Constitution eliminated the struggle between these classes because it did not eliminate the classes. These documents were only legal tools—tools which could be used by the ruling class to further its interests, or tools to be used by the general populace to provide equality and justice. The Declaration of Independence may have freed us from the control of the British aristocracy, but the freedom from the control of our own American aristocracy is yet to be won. Our present machinery of government, which grew out of those documents, is still being used in that struggle—at times in support of the people and at times to protect and aggrandize the aristocracy. It is up to us to determine how it will be used in the future. This manual is a blueprint for more effective use of that machinery by the people.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89th Congress, S. 1564
August 6, 1965

An Act

Chapter 1
Developing A Theory of The Political Process

Mass. League of Women Voters

Where Are We Now?

Our country is faced with an increasing array of problems and crises, from our decaying inner cities to our fast vanishing and polluted wilderness. Many people are without jobs, and those with them are often underpaid, underemployed or dissatisfied with their working conditions. Prices continue to rise, the crime rate remains unchecked, and the sense of community has vanished almost everywhere in favor of the nuclear family, while our government offers little hope for solution despite continually rising taxes. As citizens we are often confused, bewildered and discouraged by events that seem totally out of control. We don't even know where to begin if we're somehow inspired to take action on an issue. Few of us seem willing to fight city hall, to stand up for our rights or to make our voices heard in any manner.

2

How have things gotten so out of hand in a country reputedly founded upon democratic principles? Why do people fail to communicate with their elected representatives, in many cases not even voting in elections? What has happened to make government agencies and bureaucracies unaccountable to the very citizens whose lives they affect? Is government out of control, too big for a president or Congress to handle or, as some say, is it controlled by the hands of a few vested interests such as giant corporations or wealthy landowners? Have the cynicism and apathy that people feel toward the government created a self-perpetuating cycle of mistrust and powerlessness?

The Need for a Theory

How can individuals or groups deal with problems of such magnitude? Unfortunately, most of us fight issues as if they were unconnected to other issues—a tax cut here, a new legislator there. While some of our actions result in real solutions, others are only "band-aids" on problems, and other actions may even further aggravate the problem. Those who have been most effective in bringing about positive change through the political process have operated from a broad vision. With such a vision, they have seen the interconnectedness of issues and, if not the most fully developed answers, at least the clues to those answers.

Analyzing questions with so many implications and connections, one might best proceed as a doctor would, attempting first to separate the symptoms from the possible underlying disease. Facts must be separated from assumptions and opinions. Just as the functioning of any part of a living organism is related to the health of the organism as a whole, so too is the despair of the average citizen related to the essentially inaccessible power structures in government as a whole. Before any medical prescription can be written or solutions offered, a comprehensive and integrated diagnosis of all the symptoms and problems must be carefully made. Only when the actual root cause of the disease is addressed will the proposed cure have any chance of lasting success. In the same way, only when an overall analysis of the present problems facing our country (and the world as well) is made can realistic paths of action be suggested. Buckminster Fuller, noted genius, futurist and optimist, expresses this need in his call for more generalists to counterbalance all the world's specialists. This general, comprehensive analysis and understanding of all the systems that affect us—whether political, social, technological, environmental, physical, intellectual or emotional—can be considered a theory or world-view. Although everyone has at least some vague version of a theory or world-view, many of us have not given the necessary time and effort to developing it to act effectively upon the systems that influence our lives.

Although the path toward developing one's own theory is essentially a lifetime process, it is possible to arrive at a tentative theory of the political process that will provide a firm basis for action based upon realities rather than fantasies. This chapter will present a framework of questions which when considered and discussed with others, will help you develop a theory. The questions will center on your vision of what the world should look like, what it looks like in current reality, why there is a disparity between the reality and the vision, and what strategies you can develop to do something about that disparity.

It will be most helpful to spend at least some time answering the questions in the exercises, ideally discussing answers with other members of your group or organization. It is the sharing, discussing and ensuing clarification that best help people sort out root causes from symptoms and real solutions from crisis reactions.

A Sample Theory

Although there may be only one true description of the actual political process, different people have developed different theories to better make sense of what they encounter. Knowing other people's theories can be valuable for helping you develop your own.

Presented below is one theory, based upon the experience and perceptions of a citizen in the United States born in the 1940s during the Second World War. As you read through it, don't try merely to agree or disagree with the perceptions. Rather, note any questions that immediately come to mind, and then answer them for yourself with the aid of the question list presented at the end. Note also that the theory has four components:

—a **vision** of the ideal political process;

—a statement or assessment of the current **reality**;

—an **analysis** which identifies the key differences between the real and the ideal;

—projected **strategies** for alleviating these differences.

Note that the questions which follow the sample theory also follow this same four-step pattern.

Vision: How Should People Be Governed?

"I believe in political democracy. I believe that each person has the inalienable right to make basic decisions which affect his life. No one knows better what I need for myself than I do, and I don't believe I know better what others need than they do.

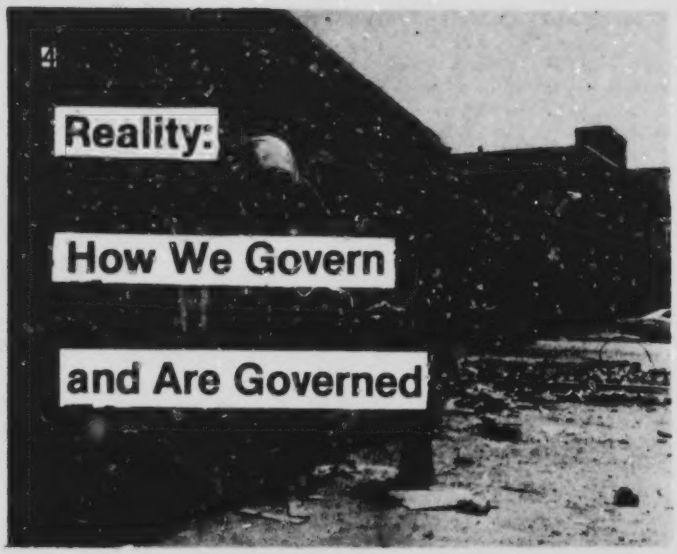
"When we participate in real decision-making in our future, we grow and become powerful, as individuals and as a country. When others make decisions for us, we lose that power.

"Because we need to make these decisions, government structures should be brought down to a local level. To make decisions, we need accurate, easy-to-understand, usable information. We need access to policies ad policy-makers, and we need to hold the latter accountable for the policies they make.

"When leadership is elected, it should be by capability, not wealth, and it should be responsive to the public, not private, interests.

"Government should protect us but not interfere with us. It protects us when it provides us with resources to become self-sufficient, healthy, intelligent human beings. It interferes with us when it spends money to keep us dependent (e.g., welfare), when it doesn't regulate for the public good, when it subsidizes one group above another, when it spies needlessly on us and when it doesn't allow us to participate in decision-making. Government agencies should solve, not perpetuate or ameliorate, problems.

"Finally, I don't see how we can have political democracy without economic democracy. Someone who makes $80,000 a year can influence politicians and institutions a lot more easily than someone who makes $8,000 a year. If everyone has an equal chance at meaningful work and at deciding how resources are allocated, then we are stronger as a country."



Reality: How We Govern and Are Governed

"I worry a lot about the future of this planet. Somehow, something has created some real problems on it, especially in this century. Pollution, nuclear war, starvation, economic insecurity and a lack of health care are the major ones. While part of me wants to just let things be, and let others make decisions for me, another part of me knows only too well that, if I do so, things will just get worse. I struggle to understand and influence my world, and trying to grapple with and answer the questions hurts, but not as much as ignoring them. I feel kindred with others who are asking the same questions and feel encouraged that some answers are emerging. Impatiently I wonder if we will win the race.

"I feel that in some ways we can make decisions which affect and better our lives. We can vote for candidates and issues at the polls. We can initiate or join citizen participation boards to solve problems. The civil rights movement and the women's movement are two recent examples of people making decisions which affected them and changed all our lives for the better.

"On the other hand, some of the problems citizens have been trying to deal with, and politicians have promised to deal with, are still around: inflation, unemployment, poverty, higher taxes and poor health care, to name a few. Programs and citizen participation mechanisms seem to deal with symptoms—unemployment checks, rehabilitative services, anti-poverty programs—and are in any case underfunded. I applaud the efforts of human services workers but feel that they are being used as a smokescreen to hide the fact that only a few hold the resources from which wealth and power are derived. The outcome of this lack of popular control of resources will, of course, always be economic injustice. For millions, what appears to be protection through welfare and social service is actually dependency and paternalism, paid for by the low to moderate income to protect the wealthy and the powerful.

"I am most frustrated by the lack of power we have over technology. It appears to have run rampant—polluting us, addicting us to its use (private cars over public transportation, chemical additives instead of healthy food), offering us few real choices and no understanding of how technology works.

"We lack real political and technological democracy because we lack economic democracy. The government and others have documented that 1.6% of the population owns 32% of the wealth and all the stocks and bonds. These statistics haven't changed much throughout our history. The wealthy, by and large, control technology through corporations and influence in government. This is evidenced by such things as the decision to concentrate on private vs. public transportation, price increases in monopoly industries and direct lobbying.

"But we do not act as though there is a ruling class. It is our habit to pretend that it doesn't exist. So we fight with each other for social services, illusory tax breaks, scarce jobs and education opportunities. We forget that those who are divided are conquered."

Analysis: Why Is There a Difference Between the Reality and the Vision?

"On the big issues, money speaks. Money becomes the mover of all things. It shows in elections to public office, where wealthy candidates outspend less wealthy ones and where monied interests win initiatives by thoroughly outspending less monied interests. It shows in lobbying efforts, where these monied interests either skip the time-consuming subcommittee to committee to full legislative body process and go directly to the leadership and influence them to influence others, or pay for computerized, elaborate grass-roots mailings to effect legislation at a local level.

"The continued money-making capabilities of the wealthy are dependent upon government acquiescence. The richer one is, the more one is able to influence certain politicians who are elected to office through campaign contributions and lobbying.

"There are several ways in which money keeps a few people wealthy at the expense of others. Loopholes in tax laws favor rich individuals by allowing them to avoid paying between $55 billion and $70 billion every year. The loopholes also favor corporations that the rich control and more so now than ever before. While in 1954 corporate income tax accounted for 28% of all federal taxes, in 1976 it paid only 13% (the "unloopholed" rate is 48%). And many, including Ford, Lockheed, Delta Airlines and Bethlehem Steel, paid nothing in taxes.

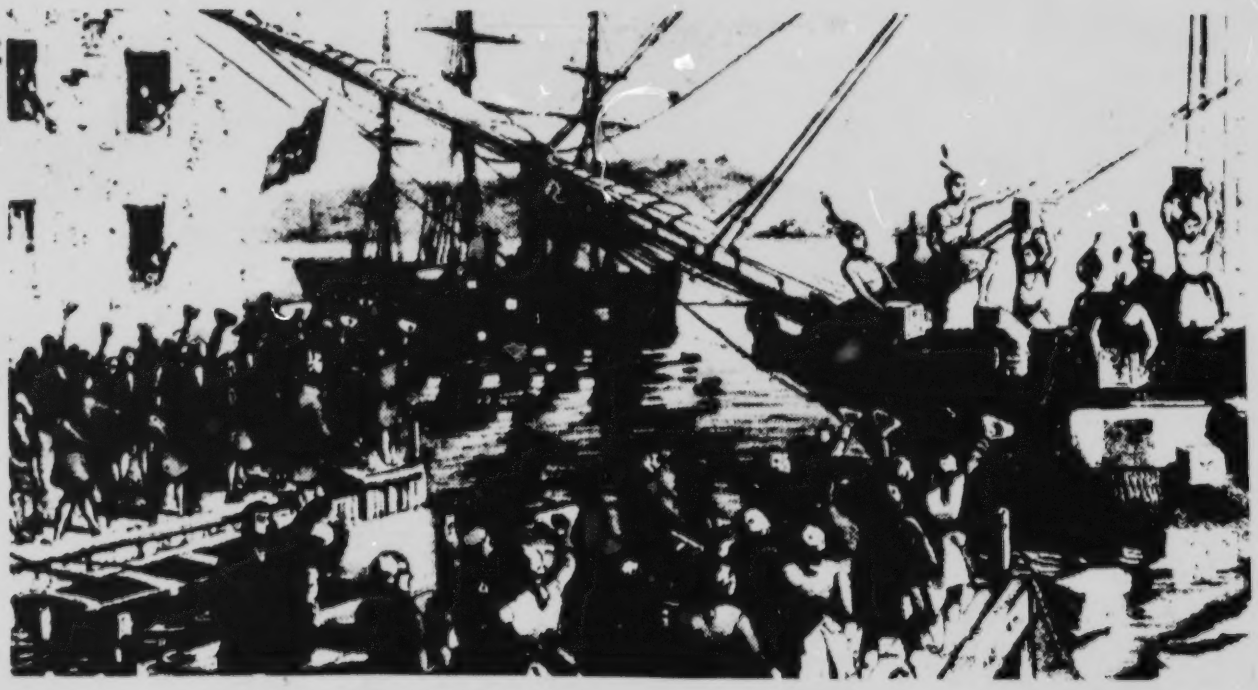
"Subsidies, in the form of lucrative government contracts, especially military contracts, have become a form of corporate socialism. Several years ago, a government study listed that between $63 and $100 billion in hidden subsidies redistributed income to the wealthy.

"Just as the wealthy use their power to write tax laws to keep themselves rich and powerful, they use their power to influence regulatory agencies. For instance, corporations raised $50 million for Nixon's campaign treasury. But more permanent is the fact that 350 officials of federal regulatory agencies were recently discovered to be from the industries they were supposed to regulate. One hundred officials from chemical or drug companies, for example, now decide what drugs to sell and what chemicals to put in foods.

"Besides influencing regulatory agencies, major corporations influence the key elected officials of our country. Major federal appointments (for example, the 10 presidential cabinet positions) are filled with directors, lawyers or consultants to large corporations on leave. Be they Democrat or Republican, they appear to agree on one thing: No government policy should seriously challenge the business class they come from and will soon return to.

"And despite a few politicians, Congress appears to agree. Of the 100 senators, the majority held over $250,000 each in corporate stock and other assets, and at least 22 are self-described millionaires. One of four House members owns stock in or is director of at least one bank; 42 own stock in gas and oil companies, and 31 in power and light utilities."

Strategies



"Since the main problems stated in my analysis revolved around the lack of economic power on most people's part, then the answers, too, must center around a redistribution of economic power for without economic democracy, we can't have political democracy.

"Many strategies have been in the works for some time and need broader support and implementation. Real tax reform on all levels can prevent tax loopholes for the rich and could bring tens of billions of dollars into the public treasury. Public, local control of utilities, banks and industries in most cases has saved people considerable money and insured that capital investments be used for the common good. Human service programs need to be adequately funded in order to keep people from suffering, but also need to free people from dependency on those services. Laws presently in the talking stage, such as public financing of campaigns, must be established to allow all citizens to influence decisions which affect their lives.

"Sunset laws that allow legislative and public scrutiny of government programs before further funding is allowed must be encouraged, while sunshine laws which allow public access to all decisions must be updated. Finally, we must find a way to stop an arms race and uncontrolled military spending that eat up close to half of our tax dollars and push us closer to nuclear war.

"What's important in all these strategies is that the vast majority of citizens would gain from them. But many of these strategies are foreign or not yet palatable to most people. Education to the options available becomes a most important first step. Coalition-building becomes an important second step—coalitions especially among consumers, labor, community groups and human service groups. Then, these groups need to be aware that many of these changes can come through creative use of the political process. Information-sharing, sharing of success models and skills-sharing must take place. Finally, we must be ready to struggle, and the struggles against current policies must be in direct proportion to the size of the forces backing that policy—for example, the anti-war movement had to be monumental to influence the Vietnam war, due to the size of the war industry and Pentagon support for that war."

Developing Your Own Theory

Exercise 1:

It is time for you now to develop your own theory of the political process. In developing the foregoing theory, our sample citizen used a series of questions within the framework of the four elements of a theory of political process: **vision, reality, analysis** and **strategy.** A modified list of these "helping" questions is presented below. After giving them some individual thought, schedule time with others in your group to discuss the questions in detail. The reference materials listed in the **Resources** section (Chapter II) may also be helpful prior to and during these sessions.

These questions raise broad issues. One could spend anywhere from a few minutes to several days discussing them. The time and effort you choose to put into them will indicate the extent to which you consider them important in developing your theory of the political process.

Discussion Questions

1. **Vision: How Should People Govern and Be Governed?**

—What are your hopes for the future of humanity? What is your role in it?

—When should citizens be active? When should they trust their leaders?

—Are people really happy not to make decisions? Why or why not?

—How should society's resources be distributed?

—How much should we have access to the government?

—What economic structures should be set up? broken up? Why?

—What new government agencies should be set up? Which of the existing government agencies should be broken up? Why?

2. Reality: How Do People Govern? How Are People Governed?

–What does it feel like to me (us) to live under our government today?

–Who really controls whom? Why?

–How are resources allocated? How well are our basic needs being met? (Put a check in the most appropriate column below.)

	Not at all	Poorly	To some extent	Quite well	Completely
Housing					
Food					
Education					
Energy					
Transportation					
Other					

–In what areas of government and policy-making could people have more say?

–How democratic is the economy? (Check the appropriate box.)

Not at all	Too little	Somewhat	To a great extent	Completely

–Can you think of ways in which the average person can gain more control of major economic decisions, both public and private?

3. Analysis: What Is the Difference Between the Real City and the Vision, And Why Is There a Difference?

–Who makes the decisions that keep the structures as they are? How do they do it?

–Who gains from this process? How?

–Who loses from this process? How?

–Has big business become too powerful? If so, how? Why?

–Do most citizens avoid their responsibility as citizens? If so, why? Do you? If so, why? What could you do to meet that responsibility better?

–Is big government too powerful? How? Why?

–Is big labor too powerful? How? Why?

–What role does the media play?

4. Strategies: What Can We Do To Reach Our Vision?

–How do we overcome these obstacles? What actions should we take?

–How can we gain access and power for the average person to make critical decisions in the private as well as the public sector–especially if major decisions are made there which affect many people?

–What structures should we deal with?

–Who should be involved?

–Whose support will be needed?

–How do we know when we are winning?

–How do we know when we have won?

Who Wins and Who Loses in the Political Process?

Exercise 2

Once you've developed a theory you should be able to better analyze if government programs and policies are good or bad, for your theory should help you document who benefits and how they benefit, and who loses and how they lose from the political process. We need to know these implications well before we begin to push for or against a government program, policy or piece of legislation.

In this exercise you are to gain some insight into the mixed role of government as a tool caught between trying to serve the interests of three classes whose interests are opposed in most cases: the well off, the average wage or salary earner and the poor, underemployed or unemployed population. If we label these classes as upper class (U.C.), working class (W.C.) and poverty class (P.C.), we should be able to rate a whole series of present and proposed government policies based on the class they **effectively** help (not just whom they are intended to help but who, they actually help). Below is a "starter chart" with a few present policies listed and three columns labeled U.C., W.C. and P.C. Mark the column of the class or classes you think is **most** helped by the policy listed with a "+" and that **least** helped with a "–". Add policies to the list which you think are important.

This exercise can again be done alone or in a group, but a group is recommended. Also, you may need to do some economic or sociological research to see if your answers are more or less accurate. A few economic or sociological examples are given; see if you agree or disagree with the responses. Listing your own **proposed** policies and evaluating them might also prove interesting.

Also, in seeing who, you think is helped or hurt by these laws or policies, think about how these policies actually came into practice. Who was responsible? How were they accomplished? How could they be changed?

	U.C.	W.C.	P.C.
–Social security	–	+	+
–Food stamps	–	–	+
–Unemployment compensation	–	+	+
–Environmental Protection Agency safety standards	+	+	+
–School lunch programs	–	+	+
–Welfare	–	–	+
–Medicaid	–	–	+
–Oil depletion allowance	+	–	–
–Capital gains tax	+	–	–
–Property taxes	+	–	–
–Flat taxes (e.g., excise taxes)	+	–	–
–Tax investment credits	+	–	–
–Other:			

Chapter 2
Developing Issues That Make a Difference

THE FAIR FIGHTER

Vol. 4, No. 5

September 1977

The MASSACHUSETTS FAIR SHARE Newsmagazine

Boston Evening Globe

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 1977

Get those taxes, Fair Share says

By Robert B. Carr
Globe Staff

Boston Fair Share Property Tax C
charged Mayor White's administration
with failing to follow through with
program that would have forced
who were allowed to in
back taxes

DAILY EVENING ITEM, Lynn, Mass.

Fair Share gets tough

REVERE – Fair Sh
gruntled taxpayers will
public meeting next w
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Tax information demanded

LYNN – Thirty-five members of Lynn Fair Share,
a citizen's action group, demonstrated in front of City
Hall Tuesday night to demand the release of delin-
quent property tax data for fiscal years 1976 and 1977.
ation of 14 Fair Share members subse-
with City Collector Frederick Cronin to

The Chelsea Record

THE BOSTON HERALD AMERICAN

"Do Not Have The Money" Says Brown

Share Deman

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Monday,

Silent Majority Finds Strong New Voices To Fight City Hall

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What To Look for in Developing an Issue

In the first chapter, you established your own general theory of the political process and who currently benefits and who loses from the present process. But citizens do not relate to or act on theories alone. We relate to and act on issues—certain legislation, policies and elected officials.

Especially in recent years, citizens have developed issues or policies that have made government work in the best interest of the community. This chapter is intended to help you analyze and develop issues in order to identify those that will best benefit your community. Fortunately, the same elements are involved in developing an issue as in developing a theory of the political process: **vision, reality, analysis**

and **strategy**. As we go through the process of stating a **vision**, documenting the **real situation**, conducting an **analysis** and then developing **strategies**, we will analyze and develop the issue of **tax reform**, determining what kinds of tax reform are in the best interest of the community and what kinds are not. Attention will be given to specific actions citizens can take to act on this particular issue.

The issue of tax reform is used as a **model** to illustrate how our process can help us develop an issue. Try to attend the **process** by which the tax reform issue is developed so that you can apply the same process to any other issue with which your group is concerned and about which you wish to effect governmental action.

As with "Chapter 1," you will have the most success with the four components of this model when you ask specific questions. Some of these are included in the model issue, listed in the beginning of each section. Again, these questions could be explored alone or in your group. Several hours to several days could be spent on them, depending on time and resources available and the importance of the issue. Keep notes on your own or your group's responses to these questions. The answers may expand, change or become refined as you begin the action stage.

Model Issue: Tax Reform

Vision

—How might this issue be resolved in an ideal world?

All people should be taxed fairly, based on what they own. Loopholes for certain high income brackets should be cut out. There is considerable grass-roots support for this vision. A Rope poll released in July, 1978, for example, shows that 47% of those people questioned about what bothers them most about taxes responded that it is the unfairness of the system. Only 14% said that high taxes troubled them the most, and only 10% pointed to the way money is spent or wasted. Taxpayers also feel in overwhelming numbers (according to the survey) that high income families and large corporations pay too little in taxes.

—Who should be in control?

The tax decisions should be made by and for the majority of the citizenry, with local officials taking over a larger share of the responsibility to see that the tax profile is equitable within a community.

—Who should be accountable to whom?

Reality

–What does this issue actually look like in the country, state, community?

Above a certain income level, the less one makes, the greater percentage one pays. Most every tax policy proves this point. Here are some of the major ones:

–What statistical data back up this view?

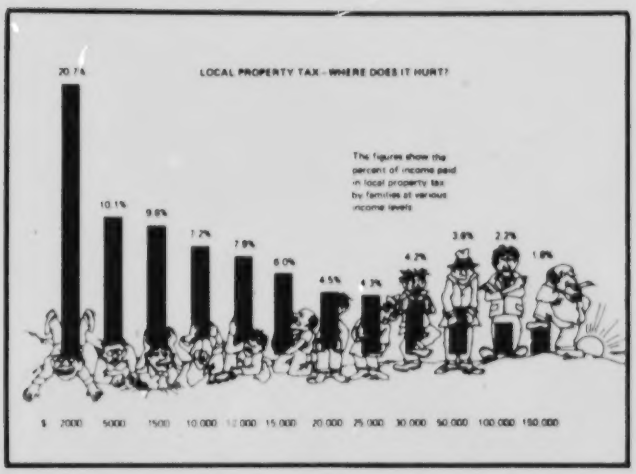
Tax Delinquents. In Massachusetts, research done by the citizen group, Massachusetts Fair Share and more recently by a candidate for governor has found that tens of millions of dollars are owed the cities and the state by wealthy individuals and corporations. Among the delinquents were airlines that owed the city $9 million in back taxes. Rich realtors were among the "dirty dozen plus two," 14 wealthy tax delinquents who owed the city over $4 million in taxes. Most tax experts feel that delinquents suh as those in Boston exist in all cities and towns across the country.

–What are some examples of how things operate?

Sales Taxes. Since low- and moderate-income people spend a greater proportion of their income on necessary consumer goods, sales taxes on anything but luxury goods are inherently regressive; they come down harder on the poor working persons.

Property Tax. In Massachusetts, this disproportional amount of property taxes paid by low and moderate income groups is shown in the graph below.

–How did the situation get where it is on this issue?



The Rich Get Richer, the Rest Pay Taxes

Tax Abatements for Major Corporations. Tax abatements are one major reason why local property taxes are so high. They are offered to attract and/or keep business and industry, but it is becoming more and more apparent that, while they increase the profits of business and industry, they do not generate local development.

Ohio Public Interest Coalition, which has worked with the AFL-CIO in its state to explore the results of abatements, feels that abatements are "a false solution to the real problem of loss of industry and jobs." The group cites an *Industry Week* article (2/28/77) that indicates which states offer the most incentives and which states have lost the most number of manufacturing jobs.

"UNCOUTH LITTLE BEGGARS!"

"Big Losers"		
1. New York	49	incentives
2. Pennsylvania	44	"
3. Ohio	38	"
4. Illinois	30	"
5. New Jersey	37	"
6. Massachusetts	36	"
7. Indiana	38	"
8. Connecticut	41	"
9. Maryland	41	"
10. Missouri	31	"

"Big Gainers"		
1. Texas	32	incentives
2. California	28	"
3. Kansas	26	"
4. South Carolina	32	"
5. Mississippi	25	"
6. Colorado	31	"
7. Arkansas	33	"
8. Oregon	34	"
9. North Carolina	35	"
10. Iowa	36	"

1. **Focus**, Ohio AFL-CIO, March 1978

In another Ohio report done by the Ohio AFL-CIO, the group cited that loss of taxes through abatement often reduces services, services which many industries look for when searching for a place to build or relocate. In addition, abatements for one corporation only mean that existing corporations and citizens must take up the slack.

The AFL-CIO study cites Columbus, Ohio giving Nationwide Insurance a tax abatement of $20 million for 20 years, while the city is faced with the closing of its schools in the fall, 1978 for lack of passage of a tax levy.

Tax Exempt Property. One quarter of a typical family's property tax bill pays for tax exempt property. Seventy percent of it belongs to federal, state and local government, 18% belongs to religious groups, and 12% is owned by individuals and non-religious organizations such as schools and hospitals.

Exempt property is unequally distributed within states. Urban areas have more tax exempt property than suburbs. Close to one half of the property in Boston is tax exempt, and over half of Newark's property is exempted. In 37 Appalachian counties, the Forest Service owns over 20% of the land, and in almost half of these counties, it owns 40%. The whole nation benefits, but the local residents foot the bill.

One problem to be dealt with is, "Do presently exempt properties still address the public policies they were designed to meet many years ago?" The Chrysler building in New York City is exempted because it is owned by Cooper Union, an engineering and arts college. The exemption costs taxpayers $1.5 million a year.

In the case of public authorities, also tax exempted, hotels, banks and industry lease tax-free property. The $600 million World Trade Center, a project of the New York Port Authority, is an outstanding example of this exemption loss.

Finally, state and federal governments lease tax exempt property to private enterprises. The Department of Defense, for example, builds multi-million dollar industrial plants, then leases them to private defense contractors, always at the expense of property taxpayers.

Research Questions

Abatements

–What kinds of tax abatements are offered to industry in your city? in your state?

–Who benefits? Who ultimately pays for the tax abatements?

–How have the abatements affected your city? state? For example,
- -How many in-state (or in-city) jobs were developed?
- -For which income group?
- -Have abatements reduced services in your town?
- -What services do industries in your town look for?
- -Do they exist?

Tax Delinquents

–Is information on tax delinquents available from your tax assessor? If not, you might want to contact Mass. Fair Share to find out how they got their information.

–Once you have information on tax delinquents, how might you best expose or threaten to expose their delinquency in order to force them to pay?

–Why haven't they been adequately pressured to pay by the appropriate tax collector?

Tax Exempt Property

–What percentage of land in your community is tax exempt (see the tax assessor)?

–After looking at the exempt properties, do you agree that they should be tax exempt?

Organizational Questions

–Which issue do we want to pick?

–Can it be won?

–Is it meaningful?

–Do we know what the other side will do?

–Does it fit into a larger vision and our goals?

This kind of research on tax reform was done for two cases: the major utilities and multinational corporations. The results follow. As you read the results, keep in mind the process that might have been used and the questions that might have been asked to arrive at such findings. Then see if the questions could be applied to research which is intended to define the **real** state of **other** issues.

Case Study: The Utilities

One major task for citizen groups is to audit major corporations and to either force regulatory agencies to do their regulating as required by law, or to propose a change in legislation that allows a more equitable distribution of power and money.

One of the major loopholes that a few citizen groups are beginning to do something about is the electric companies' "phantom taxes": money utilities charge customers for federal income taxes they really don't pay. The practice needlessly boosts utility bills and provides incentive for the power companies to build profitable but possibly unnecessary new power plants. During 1976, major electric companies claimed to be paying $2.5 billion for federal income taxes and in effect paid $0.4 billion. The difference, $2.1 billion (88%), was paid by consumers.

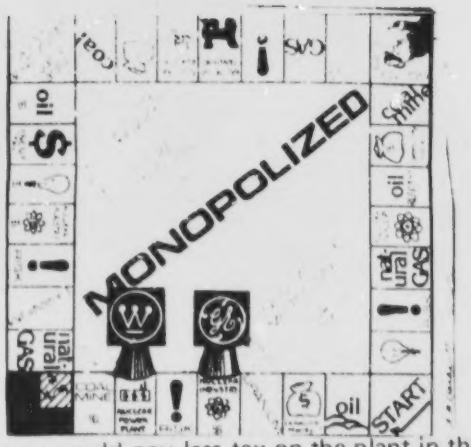
The practice, according to the Environmental Action Foundation, is getting worse. Taxes have more than doubled in the last two years; at the same time, the amount of taxes the utilities actually pay is next to nothing.

Here's how the loopholes work:

Investment Tax Credit. The federal government allows businesses to deduct 10% of any new investment from its taxes. (Last year, Congress increased the allowance to 11.5%.) So a utility that wants to build a $1.5 billion nuclear power plant will be able to write off $150 million right away. Do the savings go to the ratepayer? No, because of a process called "normalized accounting." Normalized accounting allows utilities to pass tax savings on to consumers over, say, 30 years, the lifetime of the new nuclear power plant. The utility gets the money immediately. Tax money is kept over the 30 years as an interest-free loan. Of course, if it keeps investing in new and more expensive power plants, the company will constantly receive new tax credits larger than the old ones, and the rate-payers will never catch up.

Accelerated Depreciation. Accelerated depreciation is also based on promises never kept. As a power plant ages, it depreciates in value—for a 30-year nuclear power plant, three percent over 30 years if the system of straight-line depreciation is used.

But for tax purposes, the utilities are allowed to accelerate the depreciation of a plant by calculating that it loses 10% of its value the first year, nine percent the second year and so on. This should mean that the



company would pay less tax on the plant in the early years and more as 100% of the plant's full value is depreciated.

But in many states, Departments of Public Utilities allow the companies to "normalize" savings. Although the plant is accelerating depreciation, rates are set as if they are paying taxes on a straight-line basis. In other words, the utility really deducts 10% of its federal tax bill for depreciation, but charges ratepayers as if only 3% is being deducted. Utilities keep the difference, investing in more nuclear power plants, paying higher dividends to stockholders and receiving more tax credits and accelerated depreciation.

Legislation has been introduced to deal with these phantom taxes. Senator Lee Metcalf (D. Mont.) has proposed legislation that would exempt Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) from taxes (since they don't pay much in taxes anyway) and instead impose usage tax on the IOUs. The usage tax would be comparable to an excise tax.

Utility	Federal Income Taxes Claimed Paid	Actual Federal Income Taxes Paid	Tax Overcharge
Commonwealth Edison (Ill)	167,726,831	11,291,661	156,435,170
Duke Power Co.	126,539,796	347,654	126,192,143
Florida Power and Light	76,589,129	-49,013,972	125,603,101
Philadelphia Electric	69,031,637	-15,979,809	85,011,446
Con Edison, New York	98,479,897	15,979,809	83,179,921
Georgia Power Co (SC)	80,586,404	505,000	80,081,404
Carolina Light and Power	79,845,850	-435	79,846,285
Public Service Elec. and Gas	75,915,391	5,972,556	69,942,835
Northern States Power (Mpls)	61,574,013	5,536,758	56,037,255
Florida Power Corp.	43,360,527	-7,413,087	50,773,614

figures from the Environmental Action Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Listed above are the 10 top phantom tax payers, the utilities that have overcharged rate payers the highest amounts by claiming in one set of books to pay one set of taxes, and in another, actually paying a much smaller amount. How could you use this information in your community?

–Who is in control of the situation?

Analysis

Once again, money speaks. The more money one makes, the more leverage one has to negotiate abatements, influence legislation and, if that isn't enough, to hire attorneys, as in the case of the utilities, to find other loopholes. It seems the current tax structure maintains an unjust economic system.

–Who wins? How?

Tax issues can be tricky, elusive issues, and citizens should be wary of simple solutions such as "taxpayer revolts," especially when called for by elected officials. Since Proposition 13, politicians are finding this issue to be most appealing. But citizens should be careful as to who is really going to gain and who is going to lose from tax reform. Take California as an example. In June of 1978, California voters, by a two to one margin, passed Proposition 13, an initiative that had promised to cut property taxes by an average of 57% and reduce funds available to local governments and schools by $7 billion? Not quite. According to professional tax analyst William G. Hanna, of the $7 billion that people expected in anticipated savings, California homeowners will get $1.7 billion. Where the rest of the money goes is listed in Graph No. 1.

–Who loses? How?

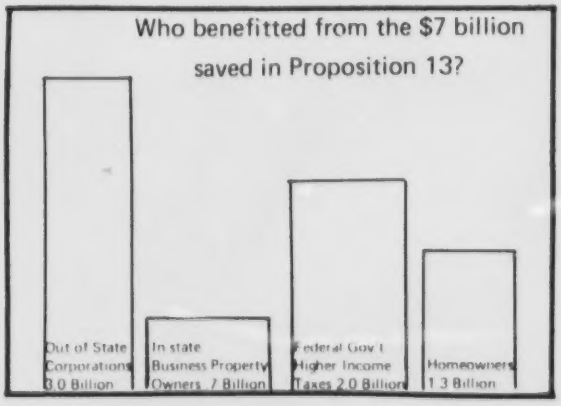
As a matter of fact, according to columnist Gus Tyler, California will lose about $5 million in federal matching grants that ordinarily go to the state on a matching basis because California will not lay out its match.

The real losers of Proposition 13 were low-income people, who lost day care and other human services. These losses have consequences that often raise taxes in other ways. For example, in Los Angeles, policemen were laid off–but not police administrators.

–What role does the media play in all this? Why?

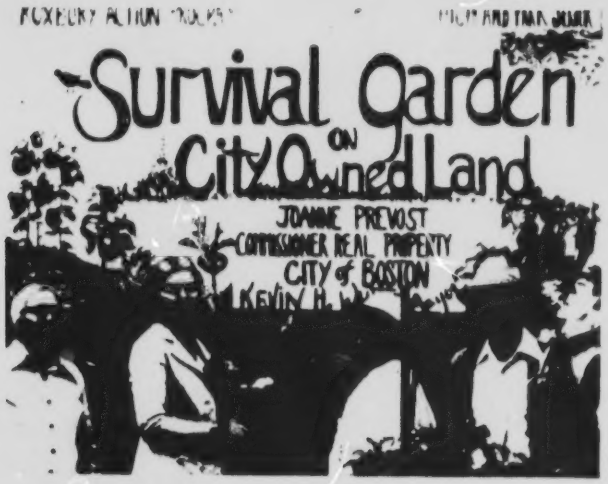
Howard Jarvis, millionaire and paid employee of a well-to-do landlord association, and his cohort Mr. Gann, former employee of a realtor firm, implying that they were speaking for the ordinary citizen, were working for the well-to-do.

–What examples support the analysis?


Who benefitted from the $7 billion saved in Proposition 13?
Out of State Corporations 3.0 Billion
In state Business Property Owners .7 Billion
Federal Gov't Higher Income Taxes 2.0 Billion
Homeowners 1.3 Billion

Strategies

–How do you overcome the obstacles?



–What structures should be dealt with?

Local and state legislation in the form of more just tax laws is a must, but we will have difficulty passing laws without considerable research as to who benefits and who loses, and without considerable education of the public. Monied interests have been known to substantially outspend reformers through lobbying and mass media. (See Chapter 9, Initiatives.)

–What actions need to be taken? By whom? Against whom?

Some tax issues to work on include:

–Researching and fighting against tax abatements.

–Exposing tax delinquents. Mass. Fair Share went to court to order Boston and other Massachusetts cities to make the lists of its tax delinquents public. Through a series of actions and demonstrations, it forced the corporations to pay $8.3 million in overdue taxes and other delinquent taxpayers to pay several million dollars more.

–Researching tax exempt property.

–Pushing for passage of circuit breaker laws. Circuit breakers are property tax programs where individual homeowners are reimbursed by income tax rebate for property taxes they pay above a certain income. Mass. Fair Share has been working on circuit breakers in Massachusetts. A booklet called, "A Citizen Guide to Local Government Finance," by Steve Gold, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, explains circuit breakers and other tax relief programs.

–Pushing for passage of land speculation taxes. Washington, D.C. already has passed a land speculation tax. Other cities are debating the taxes. San Francisco's tax would not affect people who own a house for more than five years. For those who sell the house after one year, they'd pay a speculator's tax at 80% of the net profit. If sold after the second year, the net profit would be 60%, and so on.

–Eliminating property tax as the base for school finance.

–Eliminating sales taxes.

–Eliminating all loopholes.

–Increasing progressiveness of state and federal income taxes.

Can you think of others?

From Theory to Issues: Responses in Other Communities

Many individuals and citizen groups have used this process and similar processes to develop creative legislative responses to powerlessness, poverty, the energy crisis, rising food prices and the like. Here is a sampling of what careful analysis can bring about:

Some groups have felt that banks do not use their investments for socially responsible needs, so they have begun community-owned banks that keep money and investment decision-making in the community.

In at least three states (Illinois, Massachusetts, Colorado), linked deposit systems have been developed. In these systems, banks within the state or city are allowed to compete for state or city deposits on the basis of their performance in contributing to activities which are deemed desirable, such as the extent to which they make loans to small businesses or provide for low-cost housing. In Massachusetts, where almost $350 million in General Funds was kept in out of state banks, it is conservatively estimated that the state would gain an additional $35 million in available capital, 1,000 new jobs and $1.3 million in new taxable revenues by keeping the money in-state in linked deposit systems.

Public employees have developed clout by having say over at least $120 billion in public employee pension funds. While most funds turn their assets over to commercial bank trust departments or life insurance companies, and thus are usually invested in office buildings and industrial plants, in Hartford, Conn., the city Fireman's Retirement Fund put up a $250,000 loan to create a city-owned Citizen Energy Corporation, which is winterizing homes of low- and moderate-income residents. Private banks had refused to consider the loan. Other pension funds are exploring similar actions.

These approaches are just a few of the examples of how many communities and neighborhoods are working towards self-sufficiency. Studies have shown that, even in the lowest of low-income areas, more money goes out of the neighborhood in taxes than comes back in services. Aware of this, citizens in low-income neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., New York City and many other major cities are developing their own housing co-ops and community run and owned industries, raising their own food, developing their own alternative energy utilities and governing themselves through neighborhood government.

Jane Frey, Children's Yellow Pages

SolarCal, a package of 12 bills currently in front of the California State Legislature, would make every feasible building in California solar heated and cooled. According to authors of the bill, the plan would lower utility rates and increase jobs dramatically by developing a state-owned public solar utility. Other states are beginning to use this as a model in developing energy policies.

As literally thousands of pre-twentieth-century hydro electric dams remain dormant throughout the country, some public officials (such as those in Springfield, Vt.) are refurbishing these as cheap and efficient public utilities. Over 1200 small dams and several hundred medium-sized dams exist in New England alone.

Where corporations have left cities and towns because labor was cheaper elsewhere, some communities such as Youngstown, Ohio, have helped unions take over plants to keep jobs and money in the community.

Many public officials and citizen groups are pressing Congress and the Federal Administration to convert our war economy to a peace economy. Citing that in the past four peace-time years an average of 50 cents of every tax dollar has gone to the military, past and present, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and many state and federal officials, have asked that "fat" be cut from the military budget and that we try to put an end to the arms race. Some strategies have included military conversion programs, where citizens work with major defense contractors and unions to convert the production of military materials to much-needed civilian materials, and lobbying for the passage of the Mitchell Transfer Amendment, an amendment to the budget that would take approximately $5 billion from military and put the money into human needs and jobs programs.

Human services recipients and providers are organizing to insure that all citizens be allowed the right to adequate health care, jobs, decent education, protection from abuse and the like. Most progressive efforts are to prevent problems, not just mollify the problems.

You may want to explore one or more of these strategies in your community. Organizational and written materials concerning these strategies are provided in the "Resources" chapter at the end of this manual. Before examining that chapter, you may want to ask yourself the following questions:

—What are the major issues and problems in your community? (Refer to questions in "Chapter 1.")

—How does current legislation either solve or perpetuate the problem?

—What changes in legislation might occur to better solve the problem?

—What are the federal, state and local policies that deal with or should deal with the above problem?

—Whom do these policies benefit at this point? Citizens? Private interests?

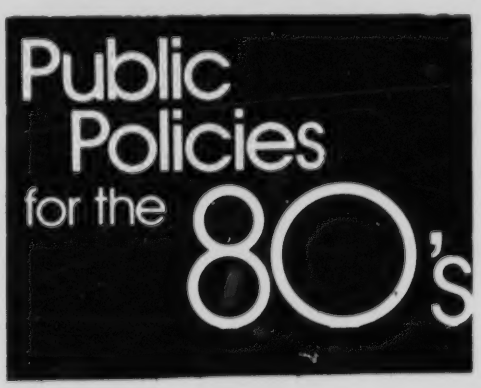
—How might policies be changed to better serve the total community?

—What elected officials currently support your approach to the issue? Which ones are against?

—How can you best encourage officials to either change their stands on the issue to incorporate your concerns or take stronger stands?

—Who are your allies? With whom can you develop coalitions?

The rest of this manual helps you determine the best way to make your ideas into reality through the political process. Review the strategies and techniques carefully to see which one(s) best suits your needs.



Conference / Alternative State
1901 Que Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20009 and Local Policies

Chapter 3
Stalking the Wild Bureaucracy, Or, How To Hold Government Agencies Accountable to Your Needs

Grass Roots, 12/73

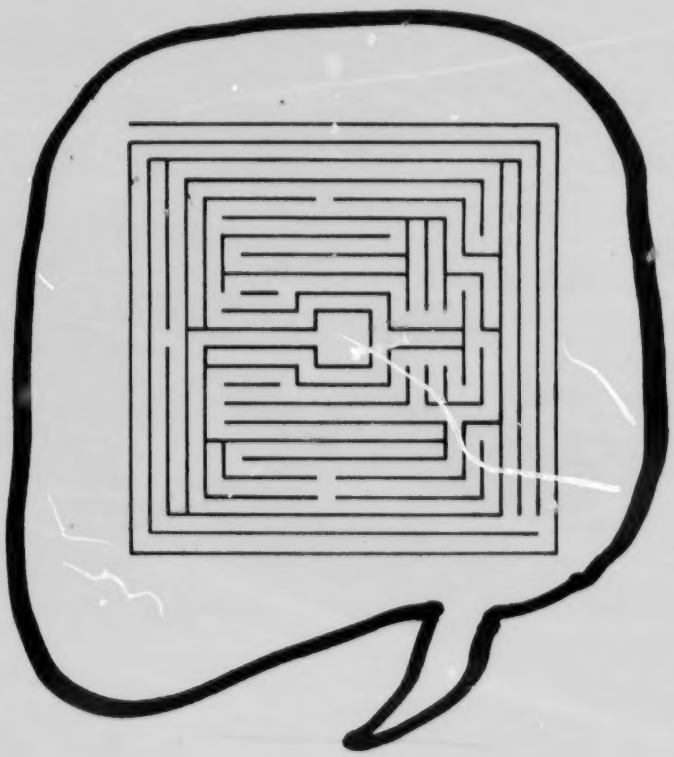
This chapter discusses ways that citizens might begin to hold government agencies accountable to public control. It is a long and quite detailed chapter; make use of those sections most relevant to your needs. Citizens **can** make their needs felt by government agencies and get satisfactory results. The key lies in choosing the right course of action.

Example

A state mandated Children's Council was concerned that abused and neglected children were not provided services by any one agency. The Council's research found that the Welfare Department was mandated to provide certain services as stated in its regulations,

but after discussion with the Welfare Department staff, the Council found the agency underfunded and understaffed. The Council decided to push for more funding for the Welfare Department by notifying the Joint Human Services Committee of the State Legislature of its findings at the budget hearings. Testimony was prepared, the media were notified, some tough questions were asked, and horrifying testimony was presented at the hearings. The Welfare Department and its parent agency, the Departmentof Human Services, were impressed with the testimony and with the extensive media coverage. A few days later, an emergency hearing on abuse and neglect was held by the Joint Human Services Committee. Three weeks after that, $500,000 was legislated to provide new protective services for the area for which the Council for Children was lobbying.

What Is Wrong with Government Agencies?



While civics classes have learned of the three branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial), a fourth one has developed that affects us more directly than any of the three above. That fourth level of government is "agency bureaucracy." Regulatory commissions and agencies affect many areas of our lives, from the quality of the air we breathe to the chemicals added to our food, to the building codes written for our homes. What isn't regulated through federal and state agencies becomes the jurisdiction of county or local agencies.

Most of us are acquainted with the negative effects of this fourth branch of government. We've all had the experience of being bounced from one agency to another; caught in a maze of corridors, wrong departments or no longer existent policies, telephone numbers or civil servants. While bureaucratic policies sometimes offer room for citizen participation, frustrations, confusions and generally insignificant impact await those who take the time to work on the system.

Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law, one of the major advocates of citizen participation in government agency decision-making, has developed three major criticisms of federal agencies. These criticisms could also be applied to many state and local agencies.

1. **The agencies do very little to represent the interests of the unrepresented,** namely the poor, the consumer, the tenant, the unborn, the old, the young, the racially or sexually oppressed. Even worse, the regulators erect procedural, economic and bureaucratic obstacles to participation when these unrepresented people finally do receive the services of advocates for their cause.

2. In general, **legislators do a poor job of reviewing and monitoring** the behavior of the agencies they have created. Public hearings are infrequent and often shallow. At times there is a very close relationship between an agency and its Congressional committee, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commision and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, which precludes any arm's length evaluation of many basic issues. In addition, low budgets and weak staff recruitment practices of these agencies often make them reliant for information and analysis on the very industries they're supposed to be regulating.

3. There is a widespread **absence of formal structures designed to represent consumer and public interests** other than those lobbied for by the regulated industries. Whenever proposals to remedy this gap seem to be making headway, businesses intensify their lobbying enough to stymie needed reforms, as in the case of the recently defeated Consumer Protection Agency.

At their worst (and the largest agencies were at their worst until Nader, Watergate and the citizen participation movement of the '60s and '70s began to develop methods of holding agencies accountable to the public), these agencies have acted as an arm of the industries they're supposed to regulate. As a prime example, here's an excerpt from a letter by the Attorney General of the U.S. to a railroad company president shortly after the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in 1887. The company president wanted the ICC abolished, but the Attorney General showed him a better way:

> The Commission, as its functions have been limited by the courts, is, and can be made, of great use to the railroads. It satisfies the popular clamor for a government supervision of the railroads, at the same time that that supervision is almost entirely nominal. Further, the older such a commission gets to be, the more inclined it will be found to take the business and railroad view of things. It thus becomes a sort of barrier between the railroad corporations and the people and a sort of a protection against hasty and crude legislation hostile to railroad interests.....The (better) part of wisdom is not to destroy the Commission, but to utilize it. (Robert Fellmeth, *Interstate Commerce Commission* New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970), pp. xiv, xv)

Where To Go for Information on an Agency

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Information about an agency is the basis for any kind of effective citizen action. For every agency there are a few basic sources of information:

- –the statutes: the law, what the legislators intended the agency to do
- –the regulation: the **procedures** used to carry out the law
- –the legal cases: court rulings that have determined the agency's legal boundaries
- –the specialized publications that deal with the agency and industry affairs: specialized legal publications, as well as brochures offered by the agency

Getting the information is in itself one of the most important areas of citizen access. The agency itself probably has most of the information you need to get started. The basic rule to keep firmly in mind is that **all government information (whether federal, state, county or local) is legally available to the public unless there is a specifically stated reason in the law for withholding it.** These "public records" are defined as all books, papers, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations or other documentary materials or data made or received by any officer or employee of the agencies. That is the law, specifically the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA, 5USC422). You may have to explain it on more than one occasion to the agencies you're investigating. Ralph Nader calls it a prime example of a law which

the government will not obey unless citizens prod it into obedience. Happy prodding.

What you can't get from the FOIA

The act allows for nine exemptions. They are:

—materials relating to national defense or foreign policy;

—internal agency matters;

—materials specifically made secret by other statutes;

—trade secrets and confidential information;

—memoranda which would not be available in a lawsuit;

—personnel and medical files;

—investigatory files;

—information on investigation of financial institutions;

—geological information about oil and gas wells.

The FOIA also requires that all agencies print their regulations for carrying out the act. These have been published in the **Code of Federal Regulation** (CFR), and a first step in researching an agency is to look it up in your local library.

The procedure for obtaining information is simple in its broad outlines:

1. **Write a letter** citing the Act and the agency regulations, asking for the information and identifying it as specifically as possible. You may want to indicate what you want the information for, but this is not necessary. A fundamental principle of the Act is to allow the information to citizens regardless of why they want the information.

2. If the information is not available, **ask the agency to give the specific statutory justification for withholding it.**

3. The Act establishes your right of access to the material for inspection as well as copying, so indicate in your first letter whether you merely want to **inspect** the material or have **copies** sent to you. If you want to have copies sent to you, it is a good idea to **ask for an advance estimate** of the copying costs.

4. Most agencies provide for at least one level of administrative **appeal** within the agency if your request is turned down. The procedure is described in the agency regulations. Writing the appeal letter may require a little more effort, if you present your arguments as to why the exemption claimed for the information does not apply. You may find it helpful to **refer to some of the cases which have been decided by federal courts** in upholding citizen access to information under the Act. It is probably more efficient to simply **say you are appealing the denial**, and save your legal arguments until the agency head takes final action.

APPENDIX 3-A

Sample Freedom of Information Act Request Letter

(your address)
(date)

(name and address of agency public information officer)

Dear (name of officer):

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, and to the regulations of the (name of agency or department), _____, C.F.R. _____ (citation to departmental regulations, which can be obtained from committee print index), I hereby request access to (identify records requested in as much detail as possible).

If there is any charge for locating and copying this material, please advise me of the estimated cost in advance. I would appreciate a reply to this request by _____ (date giving agency reasonable time to process request--seven to ten days). If the request is denied, please indicate which section of the Freedom of Information Act is being relied on as legal basis for the denial.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

fromJames R. Michael, *Working on the System*, Center for the Study of Responsive Law, Basic Books, New York, 1974.

Standing: You Can Participate Before an Idea Becomes a Rule

The basic requirements which federal agencies must follow in making rules, trying cases or conducting investigations are contained in the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). The APA establishes very general standards which the agencies must follow when they are making rules or deciding cases. There are two basic requirements: **1. before making a rule, agencies must give the public notice and provide an opportunity for them to express their view,** and **2. in deciding an individual case, the agency must give notice and the opporutnity for the individual to be heard.** There are similar requirements for state agencies, though they vary depending on the state.

One of the most important areas of federal law developed by this process is that of "standing"—the right to participate in an administrative proceeding between an agency and an individual (or more likely, a company). The question of the standing of citizen groups to participate in administrative proceedings is theoretically between the agency and the industry over whether the industry is adequately serving the public. Until a few years ago, members of the public whose welfare was the very subject of proceedings were usually kept out of such proceedings. But the trend is running the other way now, with the most notable case being the one in which a federal court ruled that members of a station's television audience have the right to be heard in a hearing on whether the station has been operating in the public interest.

Researching Government Agencies

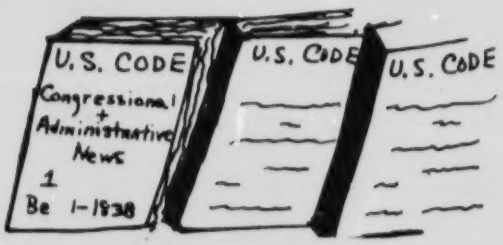
The chart on the following page explains the organization of this section of the chapter.

1. **Federal Agencies—Official Sources**

The most complete listing of all the federal agencies and brief descriptions of what they do are contained in the "United States Government Organizations Manual," 1978 (Revised), U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), $3. This manual will provide you with some very elementary information on each agency, including names of incumbent commissioners and the senior staff members, the major divisions of the agency is responsible for enforcing.

To find an agency's **statutory authority** (what the legislators intended them to do), write to either the Government Printing Office for the agency needed (this can be expensive), or go to a local library where the basic source of statutory authority can be found in the "United States Code" (USC) through use of the index.

To find an agency's **regulations** (procedures for carrying out the law) issued by each agency, look in the "Code of Federal Regulations" (CFR). While this multi-volume set may be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office, it is also available in many libraries.



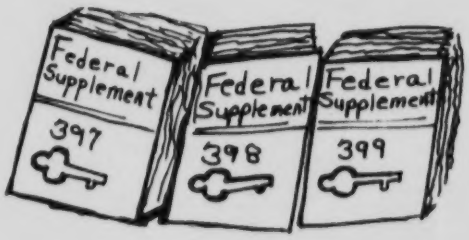
Before any new regulations are embodied in the CFR, they must first appear in the **Federal Register.** This is considered "public notice," even though the language is almost totally incomprehensible to everyone except lawyers. As a result of some advocacy work, the "Consumer News," an English translation of the bureaucratese, was added recently and is available from the GPO.

To find an agency's **purposes and programs,** check with the agency's Public Information Office. Here you will want to check its annual report (with some skepticism) and ask for information packets and brochures (with even more skepticism). You can also ask for past press releases on issues that affect you.

Ralph Nader summed up the public relations efforts of most government agencies very well when he said that the major message contained in the annual reports and the information packets is that, while there are some problems, the agency is doing the best it can to solve them, and the appropriate role for the consumer is to be cautious in his consuming habits and watch out for unscrupulous merchants.

To find **evaluations of an agency's programs:**

—Check the transcripts of hearings before the agency's legislative committee (in the federal government these are called committee prints) printed by the GPO, and available through the committee;



—Look for judicial decisions in cases concerning citizen access to federal agencies. You may need a little legal expertise or assistance. The opinions of federal courts are printed in several different series of volumes, depending on the court which hands down the opinion. The name of each series is expressed in abbreviated form, such as F.Supp., for **Federal Supplement;** F.2d for the **Federal Register,** second series; and **U.S.** for the United States Supreme Court's official series of reports. Opinions in individual cases are cited with the number of the volume first, and the page number following the abbreviation. For example, 294F.2d575 would refer to an opinion found in Volume 294 of the **Federal Register,** second series, on page 575.

How to Get Information About Government Agencies and Services

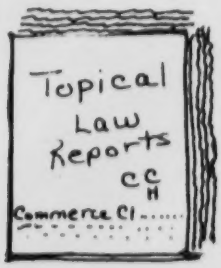
	How do we find out which agencies exist?	What is their legal statute? What, by law, should they be doing?	What regulations must they follow? What are their policies?	What programs do they offer?	How have they been evaluated? (Who checks how well they follow mandate and perform programming?
Federal Official	-Enclyclopedia of government advisory organizations	-United States Code	-Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) "Consumer News" -Check policy statement	-The agency itself -Press releases -Brochures -FYI Packets -Interviews -Directories	-Annual reports -Oversight committee results -Evaluation mechanisms -Federal Reporter -Sunset Legislation -Evaluation of contract
Unofficial					-Federal Practices Manual -Administrative Law Treatism -Commerce Clearinghouse -Trade Journals
State	-Secretary of State (Citizen Information Service, etc.) -Executive office of the governor -League of Women Voters -Legislature -Ask around	-General Laws Annotated -Ask Your Legislator	-Code of (your state's) Regulations -The agency itself -Your Legislator -Check policy statements	-The agency itself (same as above)	-Results of budget hearings -Media -(your state's) Law Finder -(your state's) Legislative Service -Sunset Legislation -Evaluation of contract
County	-County seat	-County records	-County records	-The agency itself (same as above)	-County budget hearings -County records -Annual reports
Local	-Executive office of city or town -Budget report of city or town	-Clerk's office (city or town charter)	-Clerk's office (city or town charter)	-The agency itself (same as above)	-Annual reports -Committee reports -Sunset legislation -Evaluation of contract

2. Federal Agencies—Unofficial Sources

Guides and Manuals. There are a number of guides and manuals published by private companies as aids for attorneys dealing with federal agencies. While useful, they are expensive, so call your local library to see if it subscribes. The guides and publishers include:

—**Federal Practices Manual,** West Publishing Company. The emphasis here is on agencies and agency functions which may affect business clients. The manual is designed to aid attorneys in advising clients going before agencies.

—**Administrative Law Treatise,** West Publishing Company. This book is considered the most comprehensive legal reference work on agencies.



—**CCH** (Commerce Clearinghouse), 4025 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Il., 60646. This organization publishes dozens of subscription reports which condense and analyze administrative and judicial rulings in specialized areas. Reporting includes "clean air and water news," "trade regulations," etc.

—**Bureau of National Affairs,** 1231 25th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. This organization also prints reports, including "Anti-Trust and Trade Regulations Reporter" and "Environmental Reporter."

—**Environmental Law Reporter,** Suite 614, 1316 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

—**The Pike and Fischer Administrative Law Theories,** 200 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036. This series is organized along the lines of the Administrative Practices Act, and reports both agency and judicial decisions on administrative procedure.

—**A Uniform System of Citation,** Harvard Law Review Association, Gannett House, Cambridge, Ma., 02138. This reference can be used as an editorial guide for law journals and is helpful in translating citation abbreviations.

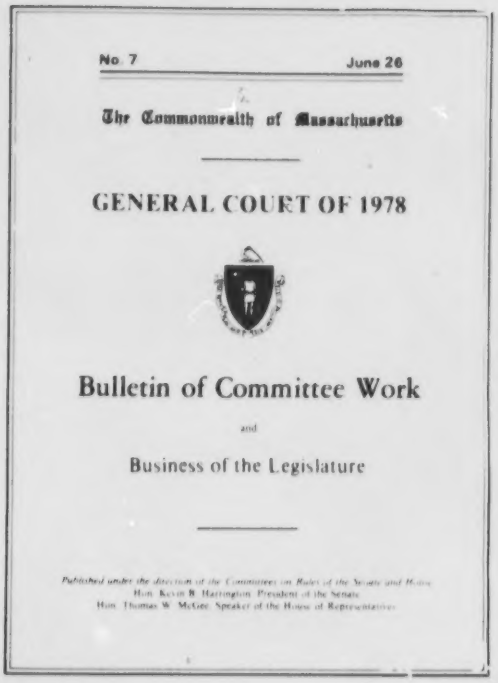
—**U.S. Code Congressional and Administrative News,** West Publishing Company. This resource summarizes Congressional action and prints all presidential orders and administrative regulations. It is useful for checking the legislative history of a particular act and to see if the administrative regulation issued by an agency under the act's authority is what Congress intended in passing the law.

Workforce

Specialized Trade Journals. These journals keep a careful watch on the Washington agencies which regulate their respective professions and industries. While these newsletters and magazines may not be at your local newsstand, they are available in larger libraries. If you can get to them, you will find them extremely valuable in dealing with a given industry/agency complex. McGraw Hill alone publishes about 60 such journals.

Agency Directories. You need not go to Washington to deal with federal bureaucracies. Most federal agencies have branch offices in large cities throughout the country. Check the phone books of the large cities near you. If you are not sure whom you want to deal with in the agency, get a copy of the agency telephone directory. Each agency has one, although it may deny it. The Center for Responsive Law points out that one way of gauging an agency's receptiveness to public access is to ask for a copy of its directory. The real public-be-damned officials will say that they don't have one, or that they do (but it's out of print) or they will in the future (when it's revised). Persist! If you can't get them to tell you their telephone numbers how much do you think you will be able to affect their decision-making?

Many of the directories are for sale at the Government Printing Office, and others are available directly from the agencies. Order one. A list of directories and the prices is on page 40 of **Working on the System**, by the Center for Responsive Law.


No. 7 June 26

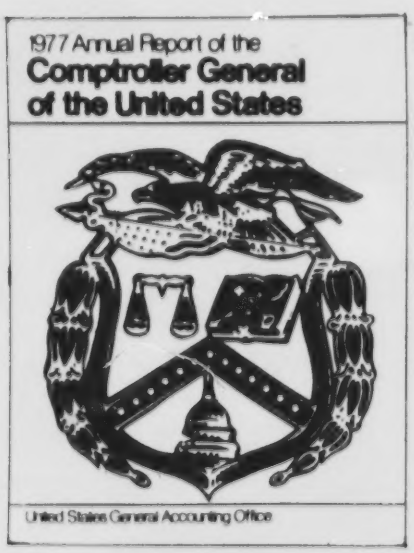
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

GENERAL COURT OF 1978

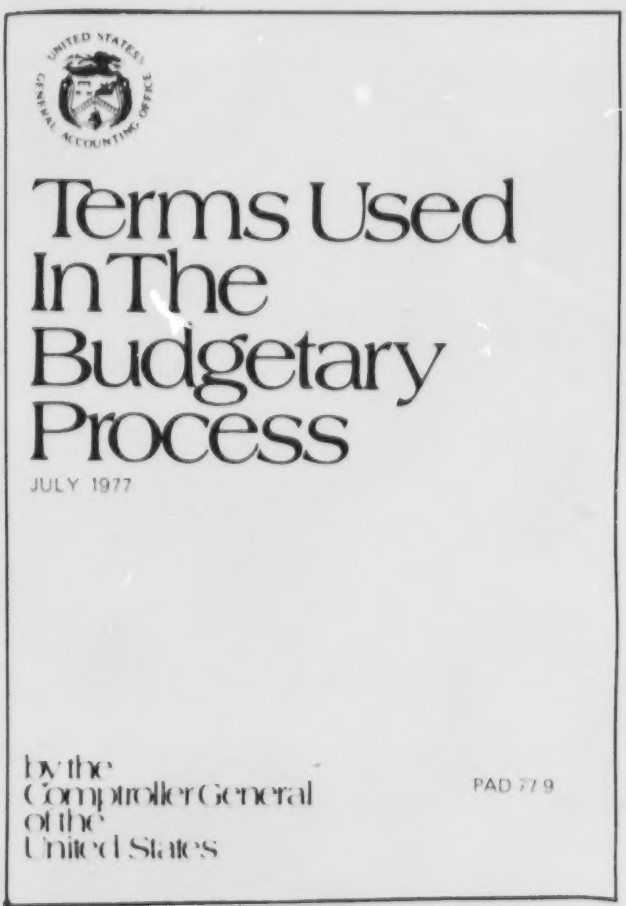
Bulletin of Committee Work

and

Business of the Legislature


1977 Annual Report of the
Comptroller General of the United States

United States General Accounting Office


UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Terms Used In The Budgetary Process

JULY 1977

by the Comptroller General of the United States

PAD 77 9

3. State Government: Which Agencies Exist?

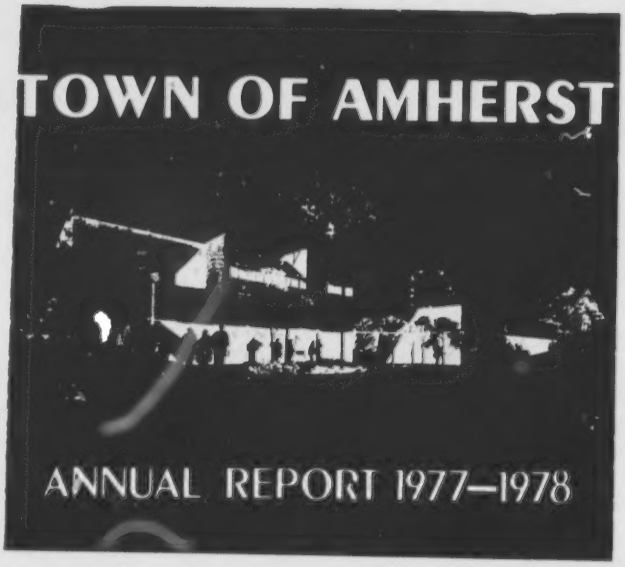
Most secretaries of state have citizen information services which list all the state agencies and organizations. Your secretary of state's office is usually located in the State House or State Capitol. If such a listing is not available, write the governor's office, and ask for an organizational chart of the state government. Finally, statewide citizen participation groups, most notably the League of Women Voters, often write materials describing state government and state agencies. Also, see the "References" chapter in the back of this book.

To find **regulations:** Once again, law libraries and major public libraries have the **Codes of State Regulations.** If not, the information would be available at the State House/State Capitol. You may want to ask your state representative for help.

To find **programs:** To see what programs are available, visit the agency as was described for federal programs.

To find **evaluations:** As stated in the federal section, items such as annual reports, the organization's evaluation information and the media may help you evaluate the program you are researching. Testimony and comments given at budget hearings for the state agency should also be checked out. Libraries should have copies of your state's **Law Finder** and your state's **Legislative Service** as well.

USING THE STATE BOOKSTORE
MASSACHUSETTS REGULATIONS
HOW TO BE A NOTARY PUBLIC
IF YOU WANT INFORMATION ABOUT CORPORATIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS!
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING
HOW TO ORGANIZE A BUSINESS CORPORATION
Election Calendar
HOW TO ORGANIZE A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
WHAT'S IN A BUSINESS NAME?
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
Paul Guzzi, Secretary



4. Local Governments: What Agencies Exist?

The chief administrator (mayor, town manager, board of selectmen) of your city or town should have written information that describes the town's public agencies. If not, or if additional information is needed, read your city or town's annual report or budget report.

The local statutes for agencies should be available at the city or town clerk's office, as well as in the city or town charters. All this information is public information of course.

To find **regulations:** Same as for state governments.

To find **programs:** Visit the agency as was described for federal programs.

To find **evaluations:** Evaluations should be available through annual reports of the city or town, as well as through committee reports of the committee most reponsible for the agency or organization you want to research.

Setting Up an Organization To Research a Government Agency

Deciding to research and take action on an agency may take considerable time, research and legal expertise, especially if you are dealing with a federal agency or are doing an in-depth study of a state or local agency. If such is the case, you may want to develop an organization or a committee to research the agency. Citizens working together can be far more effective than working in isolation.

In one of the chapters in the book, **Working on the System**, the Center for the Study of Responsive Law discusses five essential job functions for any group when researching to advocate for change.

1. **A Legal Specialist.** This could be an attorney, a law student or someone with a comparable interest in law. The work that must be done is not difficult—reading statutes and following steps laid out in the appropriate sections of the **Code of Federal Regulations** (CFR).

If you don't know of any interested lawyer, try a law student, your local Bar Association, legal aid committees, legal services offices, groups claiming to work in the public interest and law schools as possible resources—someone there may be willing to give five to 10 hours a week. If still no one can be found, try learning the skills yourself.

2. **Agency Liaison.** This person is responsible for coordinating the activities between the group and agency officials by arranging periodic meetings, visits and communications with the agency. He gets to know the structures and complaint procedures of the agency, as well as personnel involved in the complaint area.

It is through this person that your group communicates its interests, complaints and compliments. The person tries to build credibility as he advocates the reality of your group's concerns with both the agency and the public. In order to communicate with **bureaucrats, this person will need to know bureaucracies and bureaucratese.**

3. **Information Research Person.** One of the major things that your group will be doing is collecting data on the agency. This person will be responsible for setting up a plan to collect and use the information.

For food and drug or trade concerns it may mean monitoring areas where your members shop by checking labels, practices, quality, etc. (Contact the Center for Responsibe Law for more specific information on how to do this.)

This person should also try to gather information from other outside groups working in similar areas.

4. **Public Information Activities Person.** This person handles the public information activities of the group and surveillance of the public information of the agency. It would first entail meeting with the media to explain the purpose of the group and then periodically keeping the media informed of the group's activities. Informing the public of your goals, phone number and mailing address is a prime responsibility of the group.

The second part of the public information task involves routine reading and evaluation of the agency's public information material, especially for accuracy and relevance. The person should also act as a corresponding secretary, keeping in contact with other groups with similar purposes.

5. **Coordinator.** This person makes sure that members of the group are working together and not at cross purposes, by arranging for periodic group meetings, maintaining files, and keeping communication going with the group.

Questions To Help You Set Up Your Research Group

—What research needs does your group have?

—What information can be obtained locally?

—What research resources does your group have?

Strategies and Actions

Before you take action, you should be sure that you are asking for what you need in such a way that you will be able to get what you want. Make sure that you follow these steps:

—Address the right person in the right agency.

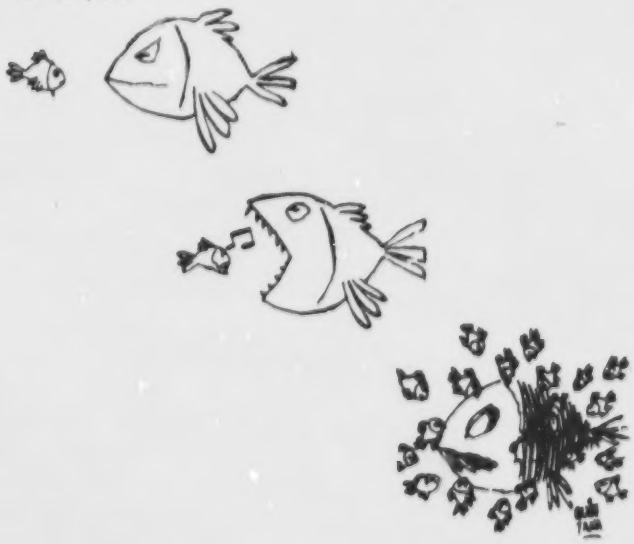
—Be clear about what you want. If you want to talk to the Welfare Department about day care, don't let them transfer you to foster care. Learn the right questions to ask. Try to acquaint yourself with terms you may need or that they may use on you.

—Learn of agencies who can help you through the process. Especially in the human services, there may be agencies or organizations who provide information, referral, advocacy or legal help.

—Learn the appeals process well.

—Remember, professionals don't always agree or have the right answers. Especially in the human services, decisions are made based on professional opinions of one or two people. You may want to get second or third opinions.

Below are listed some approaches groups have used to successfully obtain critical information on action from a government agency. Which ones are most helpful to you?



Grass Roots, 12/73

1. Letter Writing

Letter writing is the way most citizens deal with federal bureaucracies. Here are some things to keep in mind when writing letters:

—Type it.

—Try to get the letter on letterhead stationery if you're now working as an organization so it won't appear to be a crank letter. Make up a letterhead if you have to by using Chartpak letterhead and Xeroxing the pages.

—In most cases, send the letter to the head of the agency. If the agency has a specific consumer complaint section, it may be faster to send the first letter directly there, but the delay of a few days may be worth the extra clout by its detour through the main office.

—Send the letter to several addresses and, in most cases, let them all know who is getting the copies. Choose people who are likely to check on whether the agency has done anything about your letter, including:

—your congressman, who cares about you as a voter, and who pays people to take care of letters such as yours;

—whatever committee in Congress has oversight responsibility (try to first determine the committee person's stand on the agency through newspaper articles, etc.);

—the press, being sure to select the best publication and reporter. For large federal agencies there may be a trade publication that deals exclusively with these issues, such as "Advertising Age," "Nucleonics" and "Broadcasting."

—Make the letter sound sane without sounding subservient. Nicholas Johnson, another sumer advocate and former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, has described what he calls "the law of effec-

tive reform." It is worth remembering when writing letters.

In order to get relief from legal institutions (Congress, courts, agencies) one must assert:

–the factual basis for the grievance and the specific parties involved;

–the legal principle that indicates relief is due (constitutional provision, statute, regulation, or court or agency decision);

–the precise remedy sought (new legislation or regulations, license revocation, fines, or an order that would change agency practices).

Johnson then illustrates the "law of effective reform" by describing John Danzhaf's campaign for anti-smoking messages on television. There the factual basis was the hazard associated with cigarette smoking and the encouragement of smoking by cigarette commercials. The legal principle was the FCC's Fairness Doctrine, and the remedy sought was presentation in the media of the other side of the smoking issue. (Nicholas Johnson, **How to Talk Back to Your Television Set**, Boston, Little, Brown, 1970, p. 188.)

2. Using Your Legislature

Sometimes the fastest way to get to an administrative agency is **by going directly to the legislative branch** (the United States Senate, House of Representatives; State Senate, House of Representatives; City Council Board of Aldermen). Since the agencies get their basic powers from the legislative branch, they can also have those powers taken away by the legislative branch. Use your elected officials (or one you know) to be your spokespeople. Give them the pertinent information while offering to support them as much as you can.

3. Applying Pressure During Appointment Approval

Some legislative bodies must by law approve executive nominees to various agencies. On a federal level, for example, the Senate by statute must approve presidential nominees to the regulatory agencies. By asking the right people, you may be able to find out if the appointment is a political apointment.

While most nominees go through without a hitch, the appearance of a nominee before a committee offers

Rachel Burger CPF

one of the few opportuninities for a searching examination of his attitudes and affiliations while he is still vulnerable to influence. Find out if the agency you want changed must have its "head honchos" approved by the legislature, then go to the legislature.

4. Annual Authorization Hearings

Annual authorization hearings are the closest an agency gets to making a regular accounting to elected officials. While agencies ultimately depend on Congress as a body for their money and existence, their direct relationship is to particular committees of that body. These committees have "legislative oversight" of the agencies involved. Relationships between agencies and their congressional supervisors range from hostility and suspicion to mutual admiration. Attend hearings, and talk with the legislators and aides who give testimony.

5. Citizen Participation Mechanisms

Another way to influence an agency is to join a citizen participation component of the agency. Virtually every government agency is mandated by law to develop a citizen participation mechanism. Working on an advisory board to bring about change may be a long, drawn-out struggle, but there are numerous examples of instances where such a struggle has proven successful. Listed below are some of the types of citizen participation mechanisms that may exist. Contact the agency or look at the regulations to determine which mechanisms exist for you.

Advisory Boards. Responsibilities here can be broad. Boards may propose a course of action or comment on proposals submitted to them, but they don't make final decisions and often cannot propose alternative directions. If you choose the advisory board route, you should insure that the group clarifies its roles and responsibilities before work is done. There are some considerations to be aware of before joining a government-established citizen participation structure:

–Citizen involvement is not a major goal of any government organization. If citizens were involved in all decisions of government, every government organization would have to be organized, and many of its high-paid employees would be let go.

–Government citizen participation mechanisms have been established as a way of co-opting militancy by preventing major clashes between citizens and the organization, while creating the appearance of broad citizen support. Many agencies have had unwanted citizen participation mechanisms thrust upon them by legislators.

–Sincere administrators can make effective and productive use of the input given them by advisory boards.

Planning Boards. In contrast to advisory committees, planning boards generally exercise greater authority, ranging from requiring several agencies to reconcile differences before a proposal is approved to including/excluding participants' activities in any proposal. Planning groups usually have clear authority under the law to decide important matters. Check what authority you have as a planning board member and use it. Understand the provisions concerning the size of the planning board, its composition and, most importantly, its procedures.

Review of Published Materials. Currently Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) manpower programs and Community Development Block Grant programs require that summaries of all proposals be published to offer the opportunity for timely citizen review and comment. Those affected by decisions should be sure to participate.

Public Hearings. Public hearings, as well as informal hearings between citizens and public officials, can provide a good exchange of information. Official hearings provide a good means for citizens to be heard, especially if you can get a good representative turnout from your group.

6. **Report Cards**

You may want to design your research and evaluation so that you can do a "report card" on the agency. Develop a set of criteria, or use the agency's criteria (what it **says** it **should** be doing), and evalute how well the agency meets its criteria. More information on putting together report cards can be found in Chapter 6.

7. **Citizen-Sponsored Hearings**

You may want to hold your own hearings on how well an agency is performing. Setting up such a public hearing might include:

–Selecting a panel to hear testimony (the panel should include people who know the issues, who are easy for the public to communicate with, and who are empathetic and well-known);

–getting commitments from people to testify;

–encouraging others to testify indirectly through the media, etc.;

–clarifying the purpose of the public hearings;

–developing recommendations which come out of the hearings and presenting them to the agency and the media.

8. **Whistle-blowing**

Go to the media and blow the whistle. Present them with the facts.

Note: For more information on citizen participation action, see the CITP manual, "How To Make Citizen Involvement Work," by Duane Dale.

Chapter 4

Researching Elected Officials

Although this chapter may provide more information than you need, you should be aware of the wide array of research tools available to you. You can use this chapter in at least four ways:

- to determine what special interests have influence over your legislator;
- to find out where information exists on how elected officials voted on pieces of legislation;
- to find out what research others may have done on your elected officials;
- to provide you with a set of questions you can ask your elected officials as well as all candidates to get a better sense of what they stand for.

Armed with the right information, you will know what course of action to take, and you might also have quite an impact.

Examples

1. A countywide citizen health coalition was extremely interested in finding a state representative who would propose legislation to lower automobile insurance premiums. The group, however, was aware that many of the county's legislators had ties with the insurance companies located in the county, and that the insurance companies were opposed to the insurance legislation.

The countywide coalition researched lobby and campaign contributions of these legislators and documented that five of the seven had ties with the insurance companies; several of them had major ties. Based on this information, the group not only figured out whom to work with, but where opposition might come from and why.

2. Unable to figure out why the mayor was so vehemently opposed to local rent control, a group of tenants started investigating and discovered that the mayor's wife's brother was among the major slum landlords in the city. Making this information public, the tenants were able to put enough pressure on the mayor to help defeat him in the next election.

Information is available on those you have elected to public office. Use of this public information can help you understand why your elected official has done what he has done in the past and can help predict what he will do in the future. Carefully documented research can be used to point out conflicts of interests. The following chart shows the organization of this chapter on carrying out such research.

Campaign Contributions

Federal

United States **senator.** For disclosure of contributions of $100 or more for any United States senator, write the office of Public Records, FT-2 Capitol Building, Washington, D.C., 20515.

United States **representative.** For disclosure of contributions of $100 or more for any United States representative, write the Office of Records and Registration, United States Representatives, Longworthy Building, Washington, D.C., 20151.

There is a charge of approximately $10 per candidate for receipt of the requested information.

The **1972 Congressional Campaign Finances** is a good reference book published by Common Cause, 2030 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036. There are 10 volumes, by state, listing campaign contributions and sources for each congressional candidate. Price: $6.00.

For members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives in your state, check with your local secretary of state for the same information. In Massachusetts, such information might also be gotten from Public Records, McCormick Federal Builing, Boston, Ma.

State and Local

State and Local Officials. In many states, contributions of $25 or more must be reported to the secretary of state or to the Office of Campaign and Political Finance. In Massachusetts, information is available through the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, 8 Beacon Street, Boston, Ma. 02108, (617) 727-8352.

While you may want to find out information on all your elected officials, you should be aware that some information can be quite time consuming to gather, so you will probably want to organize your research to give priority to those offices which most affect your issues.

Use the accompanying **Organizing Research Form** to record the information you gather about each official.

Organizing Research Form (Use 1 form for each official.)

Office Public Official's Name	Major Campaign Contributors	Major Lobbyists	Personal Finances	Personal Influence	Organizations and Affiliations	General Information	How does this information relate to major bills he has presented, voted on, or blocked?

Public Information on Elected Officials: Where to Get It

	Campaign Contributions	Lobbying	Bills and Voting Records	Personal Finances	Personal Influence	General Information
Federal	Office of Public Records, Senate Capitol Building (Senate) Office of Records and Registration, Longworthy Building (House) Common Cause Secretary of State (see p. 43for corporate involvement.)	Congressional Directory	Bills: -Congressional Record -Congressional Quarterly -Weekly Report -DSG Legislative Report -National Journal Report -Congressional Roll Call Voting Records: -Voting Record Watchdog groups (p. 40)	House Disclosure Rule 44 Senate Disclosure Rule 44	Corporate: Senate Office Building House Office Building	Book List Interview
State	Secretary of State Office of Campaign and Political Finance	Secretary of State Office of Campaign and Political Finance	Bills: -Clerk of House -Clerk of Senate -League of Women Voters Voting Records: -Statewide legislation -County Clerk	Ethics Codes, Secretary of State's Office House or Senate Clerk	Media: -local media reports Real Estate: -Property Tax Records -Mortgage Records Delinquent Taxes: -Delinquent Tax Records Tax Exempt Foundations: -Foundation Directory Legal: -Clerk of Court (same as above)	Interview "Bird Books" Almanacs (see House or Senate Clerk, League of Women Voters, etc.)
County	(same as above)	Secretary of State	County Clerk	Secretary of State	(same as above)	Interview
Local	(same as above)	Secretary of State	City/Town Clerk	(same as above)	(same as above)	Interview

What Interests Do These Contributors Represent?

While the federal laws require that the contributor's business address and occupation be listed, the above records will often give only names and home addresses. For information on corporate involvement:

—the **City Directory** will usually tell you what the contributor does for a living (your local library will have one);

—**Poor's Registry of Executives and Directors** will tell you if the contributor has any major corporate involvements (lawyers and occasionally their clients are listed in **Martindale Hubbell's Law Directory**—located in your library);

—newspaper clipping files in the library of your local newspaper will often provide more information on the contributor. Ask for any clippings the newspaper has about the contributor.

Lobbying Contributions

The **Congressional Directory** lists lobbyists four times a year and tells for whom they lobby. Your library will have it. Check it for names of contributors—especially those with a Washington, D.C. area address and any out-of-town attorneys.

Bills and Voting Records:

Linking Legislation to Special Interests

Bills that your elected officials have introduced, voted for or made speeches about can be found in a number of places. What you can do is determine whom the bill benefits, and then see how this compares with the major financial contributors to the legislator's campaign.

Federal

How to find what bills a U.S. senator or representative has passed or supported

Congressional Record. Published each day Congress is in session by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Price: $50 per year.

This contains all legislative activity for that particular day: floor debate and votes, bills introduced, committee reports filed, schedules of committee hearings, extensions of remarks, etc.

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report. Published weekly by **Congressional Quarterly,** 1414 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. Price: $83 per year; check to see if your library subscribes.

This service provides current information on congressional activities, the work of committees, progress of major bills, voting and activities of individual members, news events affecting Congress, and some of the activities of the Executive branch. The reports also provide background on topical issues. Indexed.

Congressional Quarterly Almanac. published at the end of each session by **Congressional Quarterly,** 1414 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. Price: $32.50.

The **Almanac** contains a summary of all legislative activity for that particular session.

DSG Legislative Report. Publised weekly by the **Democratic Study Group,** 1422 Longworth House Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. Price: $25.00 per year.

This is published each Monday and contains the following information on bills to be considered by the House that week: summary of basic provisions, positions of the administration, committee action and views, anticipated amendments and proposed times for floor consideration.

National Journal Report. Published weekly by the Government Research Corporation, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036. Price: $30 per year; check to see if your library subscribes.

This publication provides information on important Executive branch as well as Congressional actions. Emphasis is placed on the impact of these decisions, and each issue highlights one or more major subjects as well as listing recent actions. Indexed.

Congressional Roll Call. Published at the end of each session by the **Congressional Quarterly,** 1414 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. Price: $9 in paperback.

The **Roll Call** is chronology and analysis of all House and Senate roll-call votes during each session. Volumes are also available from 1969 on.

The following groups rate the members of Congress according to their records on specific issues:

–AFL-CIO (labor and social welfare issues), 815 16th Street, N.W., Legislative Department, Washington, D.C., 20006.

–Americans For Constitutional Action (conservation issues), 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20024.

–Americans for Democratic Action (liberal issues), 1424 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

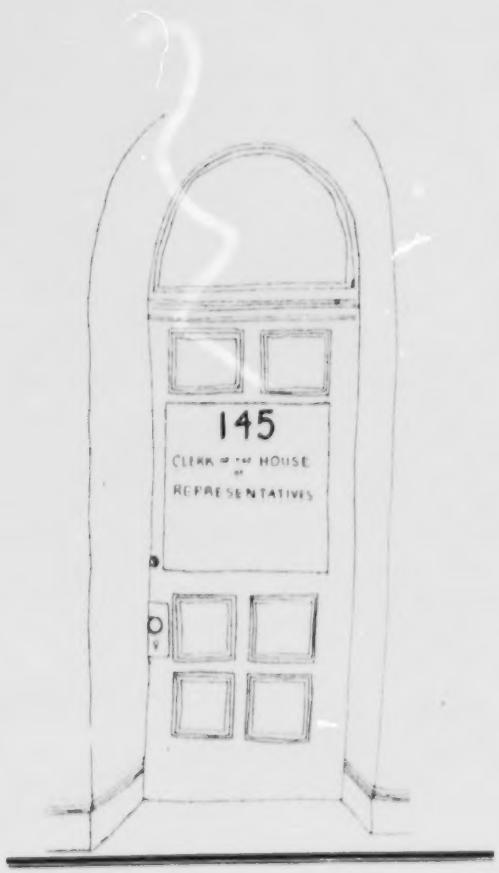
–American Security Council (defense/national security issues), 1101 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

–Common Cause (good government issues), 2030 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

–Consumer Federation of America (consumer issues), 1012 14th Street, N.W., Suite 101, Washington, D.C., 20009.

–Friends Committee on National Legislation (peace issues), 245 Second Street, S.E., Washington, D.C., 20003.

–League of Conservative Voters (conservation issues), 324 C Street, S.E., Washington, D.C., 20003.



–League of Women Voters (good government and women's issues), 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

–National Associated Businessmen (business/spending issues), 1000 Connecticut, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

–National Farmers Union (agricultural issues), 1012 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005.

If you need help understanding what any bill is about (after all, they're written for lawyers), contact: **Tax Analysts and Advocates,** 732 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006. Give the number of the bill, the sponsor and date it was introduced. They will tell you about it and who benefits.

On other bills, try to enlist the help of a lawyer or other knowledgeable friend.

State and Local

State Officials. There are at least three possible resources for finding out who has presented or voted on bills in the state legislature:

- the clerk of the Senate or the clerk of the House;

–the League of Women Voters;

–statewide groups that may publish or collect "report cards" and voting records of state officials. Check with the League of Women Voters and other citizen groups for more specific information.

County Officials. The county clerk should have listed the recorded votes of all county officials.

City and Town Officials. The city or town clerk should have listed the recorded votes of all city or town officials.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE.

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 1977.

Personal Finances

Federal

You can find information on the personal finances of your member of Congress in the following sources:

House Disclosure. Limited disclosure of information concerning personal finance is required by House Rule 44. Representatives must list all business and professional income of more than $1,000 or stocks worth over $5,000. The information filed by each congressional representative is available for public inspection at the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, 2360 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515.

Senate Disclosure. In accordance with Senate Rule 44, senators must disclose all speaking fees of $300 or more and must itemize contributions of $50 or more. This information is available to the public at the Office of Building Records, 119 D Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20510.

Report of the Clerk of the House. Published twice each year by (and available from) Clerk of the House, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20515.

This report lists all salaries and expenditures of House offices and committees.

Report of the Secretary of Senate. Published twice each year by (and available from) Secretary of the Senate, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20510.

This report lists all salaries and expenditures of Senate offices and committees.

State

Check your state's ethics code which may require some form of financial disclosure to be filed with the secretary of state. The House or Senate clerks could also supply you with the requirements in your state.

Methods of Detecting Personal Influence

Here are some ways to determine when elected officials are looking out for vested interests:

Media. Are any of your local officials involved in any local broadcasting interests? Go to your local television and radio stations. Ask to see the public ownership files. Look for names of elected officials.

Real Estate. Are they involved in real estate? The **Property Tax Records** of your county will list all property owned by your elected officials. The **Mortgage Records** will tell you how much money is coming in from past property sales and how much money is owed on property currently in their possession.

Tax Payments. These will tell you about any delinquent taxes on property owned by your officials.

Call your county Court House and ask what office these records are located in.

Corporations. The United States House of Representatives Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Room 2360, Rayburn House Office Building lists all earnings of more than $1,000 for each representative. Corporate involvements (stocks, bonds, etc.) will often show up on the Statement of Certain Financial Interests and Associations.

The counterpart in the United States Senate is the Office of Public Records, ST-2, Capitol Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. All speaking fees of $300 or more per year are listed here.

For state and local officials, use the **City Directory, Poor's Directory** (both available in most libraries) and newspaper clipping files (usually available at local newspapers).

Tax Exempt Foundations. Look in the index of the **Foundation Directory** located in your library. Then turn to the appropriate page(s) listed after your official's name.

Legal Problems. There are ways that you can find if your elected officials have ever been arrested or sued, or if they have ever had anyone else sued or arrested. Go to the clerks of the various courts in your county or city court house (they will be listed on the "Directory" as you enter the building). Look in both the criminal and civil indexes for the name of your elected officials (last name first). Since there is usually a separate index for each year, you will want to go through indexes for the past several years.

Meg Davenport

General Information

Federal

The **Almanac of American Politics** gives information on each representative's district as well as key votes and a biographical sketch. This can be found in your local library or purchased from Gambit, Inc., 53 Beacon Street, Boston, Ma., 02108.

Who's Who in American Politics gives more extensive biographical information on elected officials. This can be found in your local library.

Presidential Papers often will reveal meetings, speeches and presidential documents which involve your elected officials. Look in the index. These can sometimes be found in your public library.

Congressional Profiles provides excellent information on your senator or congressperson. Provided by the Ralph Nader Congress Project, the 16 or so pages of information on each of these officials include:

- –insights, observations and political history of the officials;
- –information on his congressional district or state (voting history, socioeconomic statistics);
- –an analysis of his voting record;
- –his major accomplishments and concerns in Congress;
- –his voting patterns (how the person voted in relation to the president, the party, etc.);
- –his special interest group ratings (how such groups as the Americans for Democratic Action, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation rated the person);
- –his key floor votes;
- –his key committee votes;
- –the amount of federal spending in his district (how much money major agencies have spent in the district compared to the national average).

The following books and directories can be found in most libraries.

Congressional District Atlas: Districts of the 93rd Congress. Published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Price: $3.95. This atlas contains district maps arranged alphabetically by state, as well as city and county listings for each district.

94th Congressional Districts (supplement to the above). The United States Bureau of the Census. Published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Price: $1.60.

"Congressional Districts for the 94th Congress" (wall map). U.S. Bureau of the Census. Published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 20402. Price: $0.95. This wall map outlines all districts for the 94th Congress.

Congressional District Data Book: 93rd Congress. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price: $7.75. This reference work contains statistical information (income, population, age, etc.) for each congressional district.

Congressional Districts in the 1970's (second edition). Published by Congressional Quarterly, 1414 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20037. Price: $10.95 in paperback. This book contains complete demographic and political profiles of all 435 congressional districts, including 1974 redistricting.

There is also information available at most local libraries on the background of your members of Congress.

The Almanac of American Politics, by Michael Barone and others. Published every two years by E.P. Dutton and Company, New York. Price: $7.95 in paperback. This almanac contains biographic information on senators, representatives and governors, and statistical information on their records, states and districts.

Congressional Directory for the 95th Congress. Published once a year by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Price: $12.95 cloth, indexed; $8.50 cloth; $6.50 paperback. This directory contains biographical information on members of Congress, lists their committee assignments and staffs, and names federal agency officials.

1975 Congressional Staff Directory, Charles B. Brownson, editor. Published once a year by the Congressional Staff Directory, P.O. Box 62, Mt. Vernon, Va., 22121. Price: $18.00 cloth. This directory contains biographical information on members of Congress and their staffs, lists committee assignments and cities within their congressional districts, and lists the staffs of federal agencies.

Free or low-cost directories are published each year by the following:

- American Gas Association ($1.50), 1515 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va., 22209;
- American Medical Association (free), 1776 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036;
- Common Cause (free), 2030 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036;
- United States Chamber of Commerce ($1.25), Legislative Department, 1615 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20062.

State and Local

For written information on state officials, ask your House and Senate clerks for "The Bird Book," which lists elected officials (sometimes with pictures), the committee and sub-committee membership, and other pertinent information.

Business organizations, citizen groups and the League of Women Voters often provide almanacs and other information on elected state officials.

Interviewing Your Elected Official

Another method of getting information on elected officials is to meet and interview them. Here are some questions to ask your elected officials, based on questions put together by Ralph Nader's Congress Project.

–Since becoming a public official, what have been your three greatest accomplishments?

–What pieces of legislation that you have introduced or cosponsored recently do you most want to see enacted, and why? How can citizens help you with this legislation?

–The referendum allows citizens to express their views on specific issues. Do you favor referenda, and what issues do you think should be placed on a referendum?

–The initiative petition allows citizens, through the petitioning process, to place proposals for legislative enactment on the ballot. Do you favor initiatives, and what issues would you recommend be placed on an initiative ballot? If you do not favor the initiative, why not?

–What would you identify as the most important commission or post opportunities in this Congress?

–Which agencies do you think should have their budgets increased, and which agencies should have their budgets reduced?

–Which rules of the legislative body do you think are most in need of amendment, and how would you go about changing them?

–What laws should be repealed?

–What are the three most innovative actions you have taken as a member of the legislature?

–What factors most influence your votes in committee and on the floor?

–List the three most important changes you would make in the regulatory agencies, and explain why and what this would accomplish.

–Do you believe that legislative committees should publish all subcommittee and committee votes so that citizens can get copies on a timely basis?

–Which lobby is the most effective and why?

–Who is the most effective single lobbyist?

–Do you favor rotation of legislative committees asssignments every six or eight years to avoid stagnation and ingrained relationships between members and special interests?

–What tools would you give citizens to assist them in overseeing the activities of the legislature and its committees?

–What do you recommend to make citizen complaints to elected officials more meaningful in terms of institutional reform, such as pooling and analysis of letters for patterns of abuse?

–What kinds of support have you gotten from your constituency?

–How can we as citizens help you carry out our mutual concerns?

Chapter 5
Working for a Candidate Who Will Work for You

Working for a candidate for office can be one way to influence governmental change. Working for a candidate allows you to educate the candidate while influencing his position before an election, as well as influencing the thinking of the opposition and educating the public on the issues. It may also give you an inside line to the person if he is elected to office.

Examples

1. A coalition of various citizen groups in a congressional district felt that the federal government was concentrating too much of its resources on the military. After attempting for years to get its congressman to speak out against military spending and for worldwide disarmament, the group decided to support an opposing candidate in the primary if she would take a strong stand against military spending and for worldwide disarmament. The candidate responded by saying that she was sympathetic to the cause but needed more information. The coalition agreed to research and draft a platform on military spending. The candidate made some minor changes, approved it and developed it as a campaign issue. She admitted she never would have brought up the issue had she not been educated about it by the group.

2. Working-class people in a New England city felt that they had little or no say over how federal Community Development Block Grant funds were being spent. The city either spent the money outside low-income neighborhoods to attract large corporations, or in low-income areas without discussing with the citizens of the area how it would be spent. Citizens from several low-income neighborhoods decided to make the concept of the neighborhood control a major political issue by agreeing to support several candidates who were in favor of putting the allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds in the hands of neighborhood boards. Their concern became one of the major issues of the campaign. Three of the four city councillors who strongly endorsed the idea were elected, and within a year they had written provisions for citizen participation in the spending of all federal funds.

★★★

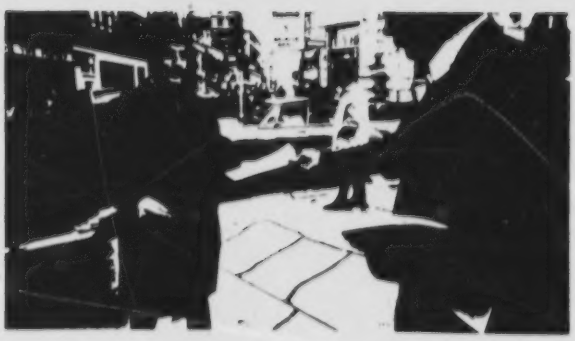
How

Some campaign workers will be engaged in the effort to inform the public about the candidate and his stands on important issues. The students at left are preparing posters to advertise a rally in support of their party, while the young man below distributes handbills dealing with campaign issues.

There are several major ways that you can work for a candidate for elected office.

One way to look at your volunteering is as **a quid pro quo** process—"I'll help you if you help me." Therefore, you must be clear about what it is you have to offer and what it is you want from the candidate. Most candidates need an organization with a workable decision-making structure as well as volunteers to canvass, make phone calls, work with the press, perform research, seek endorsements, elicit donations and get out the vote. Think of how you'd like to contribute.

Let the nature of your need determine the way you will work for the candidate. Candidates often have citizens draft some of their position statements. If contact with a candidate seems to indicate that the person would consider a citizen's platform, try putting one together. If your group can provide a good deal of volunteer work for the candidate, you should seek representation on the steering committee.



The sooner one is able to work on a candidate's campaign the better. You are more likely to influence a candidate early in the campaign than later when he has already determined what he stands for. Be aware of the filing deadlines for the various public offices. Most candidates for office decide to run several months before the deadline. Talk to incumbents (or friends of incumbents) to find out if they are running and who they think will be the opposition. Talk to the political editors of local newspapers as well as local hacks, and follow the newspapers to find out possible candidates.

Remember, from the candidate's point of view, the primary goal is to be elected to office. Every stand that is taken represents a gain of some votes and a loss of others. If you expect a candidate to take a stand, be prepared to prove to that person that he will receive a net gain in votes by doing so, or be prepared to deliver votes through volunteer work in exchange for your unpopular position.

Television is an extraordinarily important campaign tool for it allows a politician to put his ideas before an audience of millions. A political figure must learn to make effective use of opportunities for this "on the spot" interview.

from Practical Political Action

The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs

Planning Guide

Why and Who

1. What do you want from working for a candidate? What changes are you trying to bring about?

2. What public offices have the power to bring about your desired changes?

3. Which candidates are running for that office?

democrats republicans other other

- Rank the candidates with numbers (from one on) in terms of who could best bring about the kinds of change you need or want.
- Rank the candidates with letters (from "a" on) in order of who would be interested in you help.

4. Why would the candidate want your support?

5. What chances do you have of getting what you want? How do you know?

6. Would doing some other political work be more effective?

How and What

Things we want from the candidate include: (list in order of priority)

(Some things you may want from the candidate include:

–acceptance of you platform plank;

–a committment to vote a certain way on a certain issue, etc.)

We can offer the candidate the following:

(Some of the things you can offer the candidate includes:

	Number of hours	Amount of money	Date(s) it must be done
–drafting a platform plank;			
–participation on the steering committee;			
–endorsements of key people;			
–research;			
–money;			
–canvassing;			
–dropping off literature;			
–phoning;			
–fund raising.)			

When

Time line: It's important for citizens and citizen groups to be able to plan how much time working for a candidate might take so that you can allocate resources appropriately.

Fill in the responsibilities that you have agreed to (or feel you can offer) on the time line below. Make sure that the dates don't conflict and that you've got the people power to carry through with you responsibilities.

Now Primary General Election

Role Plays and Simulations

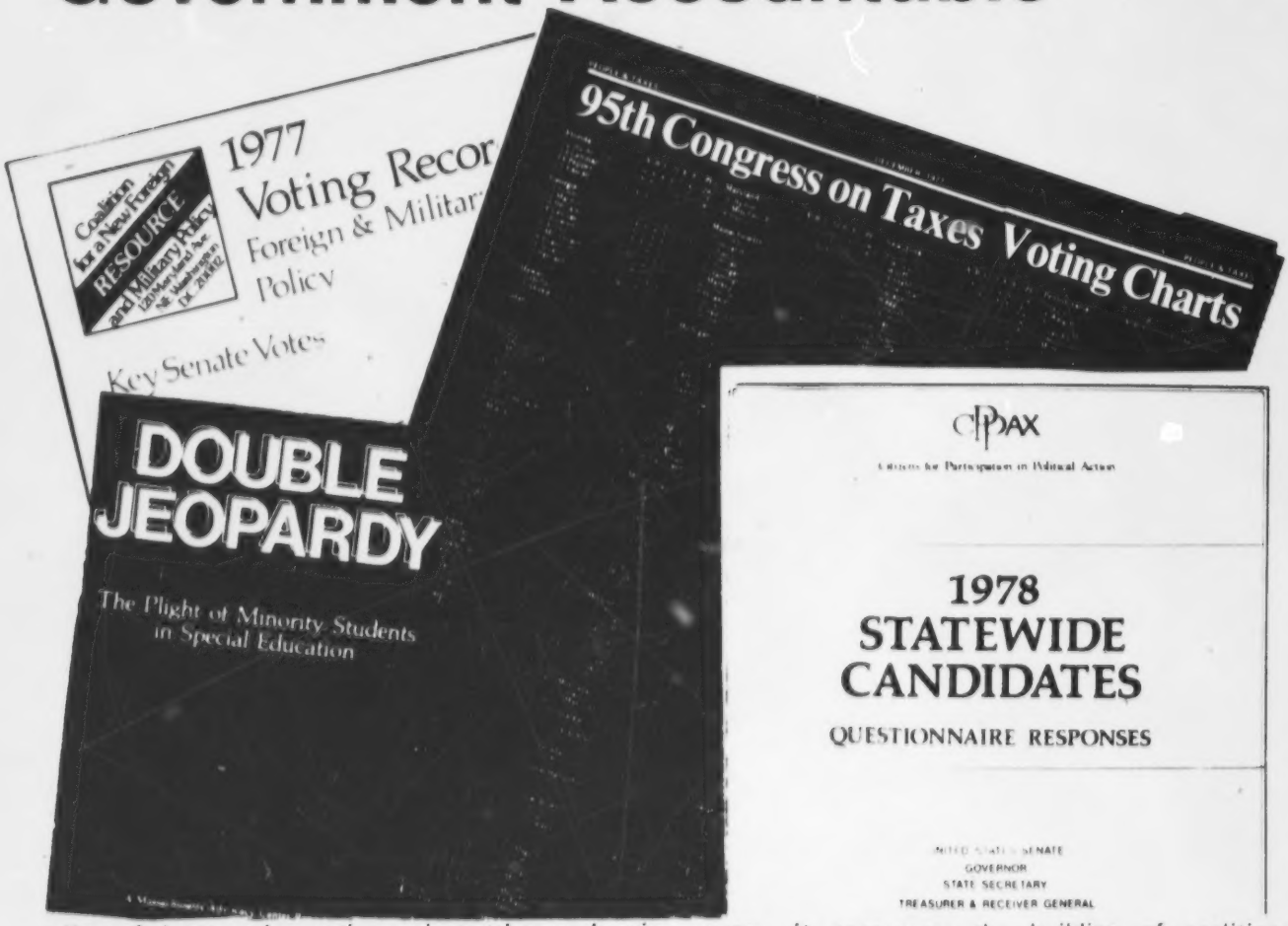
1. You are a spokesperson for a 400 member, local pipe-fitter's union. Management of the plant has decided to move south because labor is cheaper there. You and others want the city to make a loan to the union to purchase the plant. Many influential members of the city are opposed for such arbitrary reasons as general anti-union sentiment. You have decided to approach several city councillors to see if they will accept your help in return for endorsement of your proposal.

Have people role play the union representative and the candidate during a meeting with the candidate. Use the planning guide above to prepare you meeting.

2. Choose an elected official and interview him, asking what kinds of help he might want. You could ask: What kind of groups do you seek endorsements from and why? What do you expect from those who endorse you?

3. Choose two, three or four organizations that are considered major endorsers of candidates. Ask them how they go about choosing and negotiating with candidates. You might want to ask: Why do you endorse and work for candidates and elected officials (what do you want from them)? How do you allocate resources? How much time and energy do you put into campaigns? What do you actually get from the candidates and elected officials? How do you work with candidates once they're elected to make sure that they carry out their promises, and vice versa?

Chapter 6
Report Cards: Rating Agencies and Officials as a Way To Hold Government Accountable



One of the more innovative projects taken up by citizen groups, especially in the past 10 years, is the citizen report card. Based on the assumption that public officials should be scrutinized by their constituencies, public interest groups have written and distributed report cards and ratings based on candidates' stands on certain issues, how elected officials have voted on similar issues and how well certain agencies have administered their programs. Besides rating agencies and public officials, citizen groups have used this process as a coalition-building and educational mechanism. It encourages the building of coalitions because many organizations by themselves do not have the clout to force agencies, candidates or elected officials to seriously fill out a questionnaire. It is educational on several levels by forcing the candidates, elected officials and agencies to deal with, and hence learn about, your issues. Because this, as well as most political action, requires public support and activity, a major goal of this process is to let the public know so that **they** can pressure the public officials to act on the issues as well.

Examples

1. Community organizers and human services personnel in one New England state felt that children's services had been neglected for too long because children had no political voice. During the month of May in an election year, the group decided to run "all children of the state" as a candidate. It held public hearings throughout the state during the summer, asking anyone concerned about children's issues to speak out. Several thousand individuals, from elementary school children to the directors of the state's Children's Services Programs, gave testimony on the lack of adequate health care and youth facilities, and the need for more foster care homes and humane juvenile justice programs. Based on the testimony, the group put out a "children's platform," which included specific legislative an administrative changes, with certain priority areas. A 20-item questionnaire was sent out to everyone running for state office. Most agreed that they would vote for the suggested legislation. Based on responses to the questionnaire, report cards were put together on the candidates. The coalition worked for those candidates who received the highest marks.

2. A statewide children's advocacy group picked key school issues (such as compliance with state and federal special education laws) and used both its own and the state's evaluation criteria to put together "report cards" on the schools. These report cards were released to the media and to local advocates and parent groups to use as bases for organizing.

Clarifying the Issue and the Office

The process a group would use to produce a report card might look something like the following:

1. A **group or coalition takes a stand on an issue** or series of issues, as the Children's Campaign did on children's issues.

2. The coalition **decides on the target group** that can best bring about that change. The Mass. Advocacy Center decided to work on school systems across the state; the Children's Campaign concentrated on the state government process as it related to children.

3. Once a broad issue has been clarified and the target group identified, the group devises a way to **measure or evaluate how well the targets are performing** in their stated functions. This is often done by administering a questionnaire. The questionnaire can be mailed, used in a personal interview or used at a candidates' night, depending on your time and resources and the willingness of the candidates, officials or agencies.

Children's Campaign, '74 Public Hearing

Some points to remember are:

–Ask each person or organization the same questions. If you show favoritism in you questioning or do not ask each one the same questions, you are opening yourself up for justifiable criticism.

–Make sure that the questions are easily understandable.

–If you want public support, make sure that the questions are relevant ones that anyone can understand.

–If your questions are too vague, a candidate can say whatever he pleases and avoid being pinned down.

–You shouldn't be so narrow in your questioning that it appears to have an axe to grind about one particular issue.

–Allow enough time for candidates to respond, but not so much time that they will forget about the question.

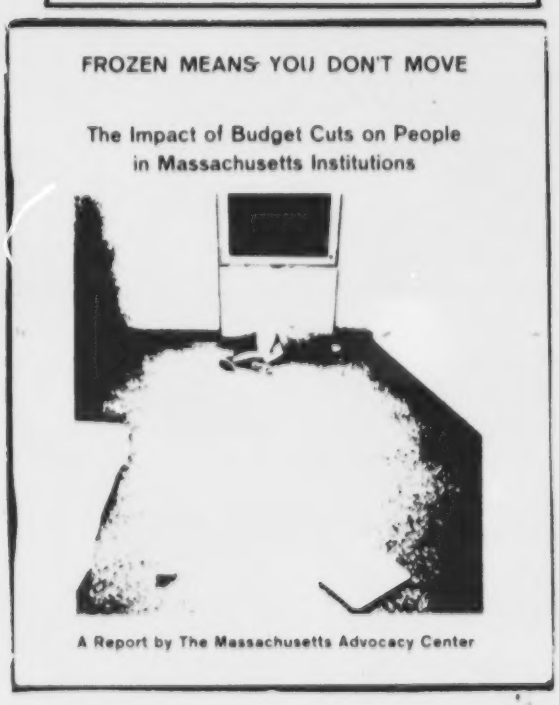
–It usually helps to notify the media, but be careful what you tell them. If you make it appear that you are going to "get the candidates," the candidates won't participate, and you'll be the one that has been had.

4. Once candidates or organizations give their responses, it is time to **compile the information** and act on the compilations. First and foremost you should issue a press release giving the results of your ratings, and your follow-up actions. If you are rating candidates for office, then you may want to endorse one or more of the candidates and actively work for their election. If you are monitoring an agency, you may want to praise it publicly if it is doing a good job. If not, you can offer suggestions for improving its performance, try to influence its procedures, or even initiate a lawsuit if the agency is totally remiss in its obligations. If you are rating members of a legislative body, you might want to provide honors (e.g., honor roll, an award, congratulations, testimonials) for those who do well and the reverse for those who do poorly.

5. Being able to **follow through** on whatever you decide to do will determine the ultimate success or failure of your action. For instance, if you threaten to take an agency to court or to follow an elected official's progress in public office, then do so. If you do not, your future credibility and the efforts of similar groups (as those who participated in the Children's Campaign found out) will not be taken seriously. If you put together report cards on elected officials asking them to pass specific legislation, then you must follow that legislation and make sure that each elected official does what is required to get the legislation through. (See Chapter 7 on **Lobbying**.)

The Children's Campaign:

Report Card on the Candidates


FROZEN MEANS YOU DON'T MOVE
The Impact of Budget Cuts on People in Massachusetts Institutions
A Report by The Massachusetts Advocacy Center

Planning Guide

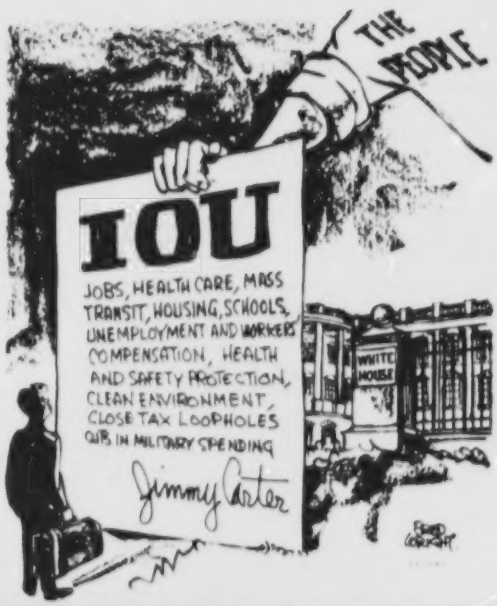
Answer these questions either as an individual or as a group.

Why

–What is the overall goal of your report card?

–What criteria should you use to judge whether someone is doing well or poorly?

–What do you expect to get from your report card?


THE PEOPLE
IOU
JOBS, HEALTH CARE, MASS TRANSIT, HOUSING, SCHOOLS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND WORKERS COMPENSATION, HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTECTION, CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, CLOSE TAX LOOPHOLES CUTS IN MILITARY SPENDING
Jimmy Carter
WHITE HOUSE

Who and How

–Which office or organization do you want to influence? Why?

–How do you want to influence it?

–Whom do you want to educate? What issues do you want to educate him/them about?

–How could doing the report card help you?

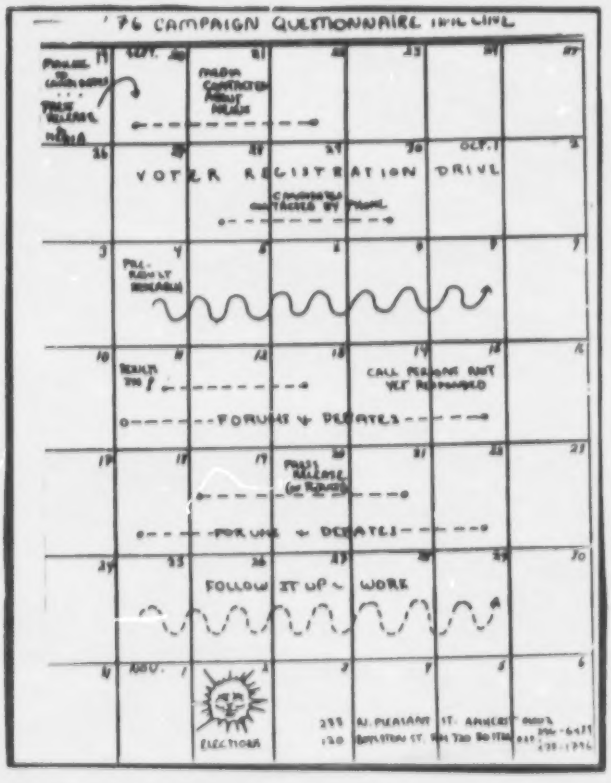
–How could doing the report card hurt you?

–How do you know that this is the best process to use to get done what you want to get done?

–How do you think this group or individual will feel about report cards being done on it? How could it hurt it? How could it help it?

–How has the office or agency acted in the past? (See Chapters 3 and 4. Also check newspaper files, evaluation reports, etc.)

–What kinds of information exists on how well the target group performs? Is it accurate? Reliable? Helpful to you?



–Can your group alone get the individual or agency to fill out the questionnaires, or will it take a coalition of groups? If you need a coalition, who do you think will have to participate in order for the target group to respond to the questionnaire? Which groups? Which individuals?

What and When

–What must you do, and how long will it take you to:

–organize a coalition?

–decide on an issue? How will it be done (e.g., public hearings, series of meetings, a formal study)?

–put together a platform, allowing adequate time for research?

–Can you specify dates by which each step will be completed? (Construct a time line similar to the one below.)

Today

Final date

Checklist: Putting Together a Candidate Questionnaire

Planning the Questionnaire

1. Am I as knowledgeable as I should be about the issue? Yes Maybe No

2. Do I know specifically what it is tthat I want changed?

   –by whom?
   –when?
   –how?
   –why?
   –where?

3. Do my questions reflect what I want?

4. Is the change I am seeking realistic in terms of the change the office(s) or the person(s) seeks?

5. Are the questions absolutely too threatening?

6. Are the questions too vague and general?

7. Are the questions yes and no questions?

8. Am I asking a sufficiently small number of questions so that the public will not be confused when I compile the answers?

9. Have I involved the media sufficiently?

   –Are they giving pre-event coverage?
   –Are they covering the event?
   –Will they list the results of the questionnaire?

10. Have I given the candidates a chance to mull over the questions beforehand?

11. Do I have specific people designated to ask specific questions?

12. Do I have strategies to insure that the candidates won't be able to sneak out of answers?

Using the Questionnaire

(for each question asked of each candidate)

1. Is the response a quality response? Will it really deal with the problem?

2. Is the response quantifiable? Does it say:

   –what will be done;
   –by whom;
   –when;
   –where;
   –how much;
   –what happens if not done?

3. Is the response unqualified–e.g., no "ifs," "ands," "buts"

Role Plays and Simulations

Here are some exercises you can use to develop the skills necessary for assembling report cards on agencies, candidates and elected officials.

1. Your community is being threatened by bank redlining practices (the process banks use to discriminate against certain neighborhoods when granting mortgages, leading to deterioration of whole blocks for lack of home improvement funds). You feel that anti-redlining legislation should be passed by the state government and want to develop a statewide coalition to do so.

   –Who might your supporters be?

   –Who might be your opposition?

   –What might your platform look like?

   –What might your questionnaire look like?

2. Your group is about to quiz Candidate X as to her stand on the need for alternative education (student-centered, creative approaches to learning) in your community. Divide your group into the following:

   –Group A: consisting of at least one person who designs questions that are too vague to pin down the candidate;

   –Group B: at least one person who designs questions that are too specific to pin down the candidate;

   –Group C: at least one person who tries to come up with the questions that will best pin down the candidate;

   –Group D: the candidate, who tries to answer the questions in such a way as to be able to gain as many votes as possible;

   –Group E: the voters, who will vote for a candidate based on the results of the questioning.

Begin the questioning. After 15 minutes, ask for comments from the voters.

Chapter 7
Lobbying

Much of the information that follows on "how the system works" was gathered from interviews with U.S. Representative Robert Drinan (D. Mass.) and Mass. State Representative Richard Roche (D. Springfield, Mass.). It should be noted that these officials, both vigorous advocates of public interest lobbying, strongly urge citizens to participate actively in the political process. "Less than 2%-3% of the population contribute to candidates or go to a political event," stated Drinan. "People need to go beyond sideline participation to make the system work."

Roche was even more emphatic. "Lobbying in the public interest is necessary both as a defensive measure, to protect rights that now exist, and as a way of increasing participation for the public good. The ordinary citizen must be put on an equal footing with special interests. When citizens fail to participate, the state and the country suffer. Public interest lobbying does work. Ten or twelve letters and telephone calls placed at the right time have swung decisions."

A League of Women Voters brochure describes lobbying as a "high-powered word for nothing more than trying to convince someone to see things your way."[1]

Some groups can do this better than others. Some major financial interests hold parties with lavish food and drinks in private rooms at the Capitol to help persuade congressmen to their point of view. Well-financed lobbyists can often influence the leadership to use its power to pass or stop a bill, and thus skip the sub-committee to committee to full legislative body process. Large campaign contributions as well as gifts, meals and plane trips are often used to encourage public officials to vote a certain way on pieces of legislation.

While lobbying in the public interest is becoming a significant force in legislation today (thanks to Ralph Nader and his public interest groups, Common Cause and a host of statewide public lobbying groups), most citizen groups lack the financial resources to even approach the money spent by private interests. On top of this, many also lack the skills and organization to mobilize any kind of lobbying effort.

While this chapter cannot provide citizen groups with the economic resources to equal the lobbying power of major private interests, it does provide some of the major organizational techniques necessary to do so. Public lobbyists need to remember that, while they cannot offer lavish gifts and other economic favors, they do have a potentially more powerful resource: their cause—the welfare of the general public that the government is supposed to protect through its law-making process. Mobilizing enough of the right people at the right time to let legislators know how possible legislation affects the public can work better than all the money in the world.

1. from "Lobbying," a pamphlet published by the Massachusetts League of Women Voters, 120 Boylston St., Boston, Ma.

How the Lobbying Game is Played

Before you become involved in the legislative process, you should be aware of some of the nuances of the game. Metaphorically speaking, lobbying is big-league action for most citizen groups. Teams need to be formed and gotten into shape, rules and regulations must be understood, and plays must be memorized and practiced. While citizen groups may not have the skills and experience to go undefeated in a season, they are certainly in a position to pull some major upsets.

This section should be considered a primer in the political process, an on-the-field view of how the game is really played. It concludes with seven strategies for public lobbying survival by one of the real pros in public interest lobbying, John Gardner, founder of Common Cause.

If you think that all you've got to do to get your bill passed is to work your way up the legislature ladder, from subcommittee to committee to the full legislature and finally to executive approval, then you're as prepared as someone who wants to play touch football in the National Football League. If you are about to do any lobbying, especially for a controversial bill, there are some important things to watch out for.

Some Rules of the Game

1. The Power Play

The Power Play takes place when the legislative leadership exerts pressure on individual legislators to vote a certain way, keeping them in line instead of allowing them to vote the way that they see fit. The leadership may offer certain **incentives** ("Vote our way and we'll pass your bill or make you chairman of a committee.") or **punishments** ("If you don't vote our way, we will send your bill back into committee.").

The leadership has various ways of keeping people in line depending on the power or kinds of political plums they have to offer. In Massachusetts, the Democratic Speaker of the House, for instance, has substantial power over 101 of the 240 representatives through the appointment process, since he determines:

- –the majority leader;
- –the majority whips;
- –all members–Rules Committee;
- –all members–Ways and Means;
- –all members–Committee on 3rd Reading;
- –all 22 chairpeople–committees;
- –all 22 vice-chairpeople.

If a legislator aspires to any of these positions, he had better fall in line and do so at the very beginning. At the beginning of each session, the Speaker is not elected by secret ballot; rather, each member of the House must stand up and say whom he or she is voting for. To quote Roche, "God help you if you are not voting for the winner. You might as well go home. You won't get your legislation through, and you'll be shafted every chance the Speaker gets." Since Massachusetts is about to cut its House from 240 to 160 members, the next speaker will have appointive power over a still greater proportion of representatives (101 of 160).

Another way that the leadership keeps people in line is in the voting process. The U.S. Congress and some state legislatures, including Massachusetts, use a scoring system during votes not unlike a scoreboard. As members signal their votes, a green light on this huge board goes on if the person votes for the bill, a red one if the person votes aginst the bill. Too often, according to Roche, a legislator who is unfamiliar with a piece of legislation or who wants to be in the good graces of the leadership will vote the way the leadership does, as revealed by the green or red light.

Detecting Power Plays. Sometimes a bill that the leadership wants passed fails to make it, and a motion to reconsider will be entertained, but not before an adjournment for several hours or even a day while pressure is placed on certain representatives to turn them around. If a legislator you are working with on an issue has voted aginast the leadership, one or more of the following might happen between votes:

- –She may get a call from leadership, saying, "You voted against our bill. You have a bill in Ways and Means. We think we can get your bill passed if you vote for ours."
- –She may get a call from the chairman of one of his committees or from a close colleague, asking him to vote for the bill,
- –She may have a lobbyist call and say, "We can do a lot for you if you vote for this bill."

To understand the power play you must:

- –understand the true structure in you legislature (what power does the leadership have? how is it used?)

–knowing what the powerful committees are. Usually they reflect the money interests in your state. (Ways and Means, and Rules committees are always powerful.) What major bills have been passed by those committees? Who wins? Who loses?

–look for dramatic changes in consecutive votes on the same bill.

The only sure protection against such power plays is to change the leadership structure that permits them to occur. To bring about the necessary Rules changes, you will have to develop a broad base of support among both legislators and the public.

2. Watch for the Plays Coming from the Sidelines

If you think the quarterback (the speaker of the house, the president of the Senate) calls all the plays, guess again. When it comes to big financial interests, lobbyists are often in command.

They have several ways that work with legislative bodies. According to the editors of "Beacon Hill Update," a newsletter that monitors low-income legislation in Massachusetts, lobbyists operate in the following ways:

–They develop personal friendships with House and Senate leadership.

–They provide campaign contributions to the right legislators. One lobbyist in Massachusetts gets each employee of his organization to make the $1,000 maximum contribution to the Committee to Reelect a Democratic House and Senate.

–They use political networks to mobilize people around primary and election days.

–They perform favors for legislators, from finding work for people to speeding up services to "acting as though they were legislative committee staffers, if not actual members."

There is big money involved in big-time lobbying. According to files kept in the Massachusetts secretary of state's office, one lobbyist made $59,000 in 6 months.

IT PAYS TO LOBBY

What's in it for the big time lobbyists? Files in the Secretary of State's office for each of lobbyist William Malloy's employers reveal that for the first six months of 1978 he was paid the following, not including expenses: State Police Assoc., $3000; Savings Bank Assoc., $7800; Raytheon Co., $2000; Mass. Medical Society, $3000; Mass. Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, $5000; Mass. Wholesalers of Malt Beverages, $4000; Associated General Contractors, $1500; Mass. Society of Certified Public Accountants, $2000; Mutual Savings Central Fund, no fee; Greylock Assoc., $10,000; and N.E. Harness Raceway, $5000. Grand total: $59,300.

–from **Beacon Hill Update**, Sept., 1978.

When a strong industry group gears up for a major assault on the legislature, it has generally prevailed; but not always and less so each year as public lobbying becomes stronger and stronger, and starts counteracting the private lobbyists.

Some ways to spot coaching from the sidelines are:

–Finding out who the key lobbyists are by asking any legislator or political observer;

–Researching records in secretary of state's office to find out how much they make and from whom;

–Learning what issues they are for and aginst. Are they against yours?

–Discovering the many ways that they have to lobby. Talk to legislators. What kinds of actions are they using? How can you best combat these tactics? Some methods include:

–providing a legislator with fact sheets;
–going to the leadership with facts and figures;

–exposing shady lobbying by going to the media.

–Pushing for lobbying reform when necessary. (Keep in contact with the Common Cause chapter in your state as well as similar groups.)

–Working for public financing of elections.

3. Watch for Pep Rallies and Heavy Recruiting

Particularly during election season, big financial interests use their power and resources to create public support for their private concerns.

An Example. Promotion is usually done on a large scale and can be deceiving. For instance, according to several political observers, when the initiative to establish a State Power Authority came before the Massachusetts voters in 1976, the utilities tried to tie the bill to welfare, lack of competition and inefficiency in state government, promoting their arguments with hundreds of thousands of dollars.

While the monied interests are not the only groups who can distort the truth, they do have the power to affect people in ways that others cannot. Even though workers would not have lost jobs if the initiative had passed due to a grandfather clause, written information from the utility industry gave the opposite impression.

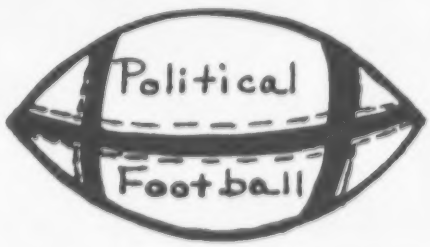
Apparently feeling that public participation in the electric utilities would lead to public participation in the other utilities, at least one state gas company included notices in its bills asking people to vote "no" on the initiative, although they could not be directly effected at all by the outcome.

But perhaps the most blatant use of their power came when the electric utilities let their workers off on election day to work at the polls to defeat the iniative. The thousands of instant poll workers, many unjustly fearing loss of their jobs, far outnumbered the volunteer public lobbyists.

This movement against the initiative was part of an even larger grass roots lobbying campaign modeled on an approach to government influence that is used by large financial interests across the county. According to several sources, the electric utility industry in Massachusetts has identified at least two or three people (often employees) in each legislative district of the state, getting them to work for selected candidates as well as contribute money, and then using the favors gained to influence the candidate to respond appropriately on issues affecting them.

Such grass-roots organizing approaches are increasing throughout the country. The most spectacular is one run by Richard Viguerie, a mass-marketing specialist from Virginia who, according to Time magazine, has compiled a detailed list of some four million conservative activists. Viguerie and his 300 employees staff two IBM computers that can produce lists of likely contributors, with details of how they stand on particular issues and what they have given to which candidates and causes in the past. He figures he will send out about 100 million letters in 1978. Carefully targeted mailings go first class and include a stamped return envelope for contributions. Often his letters will ask the recipients to send their own pleas on certain legislative measures to their members of Congress, with postcards and wording provided. Over 2.5 million letters urging action against the Panama Canal treaties were sent by his organization.

Lobbyists are the basic link between special interest groups and government policy-setters. Particularly in a technical field, such as energy, lobbyists provide much information upon which the government bases its decisions. Since the information special interests provide may be self-serving and one-sided, it is important that both the public and government officials who use the information know who pays the lobbyists how much and to do what.



According to Common Cause and other public interest groups, the existing federal lobby disclosure system does not have this information. Common Cause's study of the energy lobbyists dealing with Carter's energy bill found that:

- only one in 10 energy-related organizations with Washington representatives register with Congress as a lobbying group;
- less than half of the Washington representatives of these organizations register with Congress as lobbyists;
- a number of individuals frequently quoted and described as lobbyists in the press never register as lobbyists with Congress;
- Most of those who do register with Congress report such small expenditures that their reports are close to meaningless.

"Time" magazine reported that less than 2,000 lobbyists registered with Congress while the actual number is 15,000, up from 8,000 in 1973. It is not surprising that, during the summer of 1978, "a mere handful of lobbyists" was able to kill a bill that would have required all lobbyists to reveal who pays them, whom they represent and what issues they have sought to shape.

The current federal lobby disclosure laws: do not require groups to register unless their "principle purpose" is influencing Congress; covers only those who "communicate directly with Congress" and does not include those who lobby for the executive branch. As a result, ads like the one following are not considered lobbying according to the law. Does this appear to be lobbying to you?

Citizens can do several things to combat these practices:

- Learn the facts and figures of proposed legislation, initiatives and referenda, and get that information to the public in as many ways as possible.
- Push for lobbying reform. Common Cause is working on both a federal and state level for this reform. You may also want to see its study of the oil companies entitled, "The Power Persuaders."
- Beware of and expose shady lobbying approaches. See, "Knowing When to Blow the Whistle," p. 68.

A similar misleading process often takes place when elected officials state in public that they favor a certain bill, but then vote against its coming up for a vote in committee.

Things citizens can do include:

- –attending executive sessions of committees. Make sure legislators know that you are there by introducing yourself before the meeting.
- –pushing for legislation to make committee voting public;
- –looking at roll calls and records of Congress to see who voted for and against bringing up a bill for debate.

4. Know When the Game Is Fixed

In some instances, in order to make themselves look good in the public eye while at the same time wanting to insure that a measure be defeated, legislators in one house will pass legislation knowing full well that it will be defeated by the other house.

5. Watch for the Statue of Liberty and Other Razzle Dazzle Plays

Committee hearings can be illusory. A lot of grandstanding and posturing takes place here. Since these hearings are open to the public and the media, some elected officials may say what is politically expedient for the public to hear and then in executive session (where the decisions are actually made and where few few, if any, of the public attend) vote the opposite because of pressure from the leadership or economic interests. Generally, no public records are kept of committee votes.

I think it's just terrible the way you people in meatpacking have to work with all that noise and if there were ANYTHING we in the State House could do to help we certainly would...

6. Know Who's a Good Offensive Player and Who's a Good Defensive Player

Just as many foorball players specialize in offense or defense, some legislators pride themselves in being able to get a bill passed while others are good at getting bills killed. You should learn if you will have to deal with any of these specialists. The best way to identify them is by talking with other legislators as well as those who know the political scene, and by reading articles and political columns in newspapers, especially those that cover the budget and other big issues.

7. Know When to Blow the Whistle

As a citizen looking out for the public interest, you have the right and responsibility to blow the whistle when you see some illegal play occurring. Here are some clues to look for:

- —Is the leadership putting unnecessary stress on representatives to vote for or against an issue?
- —Who votes for and against important economic issues?
- —Is there a dramatic change in voting patterns on a bill after reconsideration?
- —Are elected officials living way beyond their means?
- —Are there certain bills that make it through the House and Senate extraordinarily fast? If so, who wins? Who loses?
- —Do the same names appear on different candidate financial disclosure reports? Who do these people represent? Who wins? Who loses?
- —Do the same industries contribute to certain candidates? What other interests might this candidate support?
- —Do the same printing and supply companies contribute to different legislators?

What you can do

- —Hire or enlist the support of an investigative reporter (or try to do it yourself).
- —Go to the media with information.
- —Work to elect better people to office.

Strategies

1. **Sustained Action**

The first rule is that an effective instrument of citizen action must be a full-time, continued presence on the scene. One of the deepest failings of citizen action is the here-today-gone-tomorrow campaign, the unpredictable waxing and waning of enthusiasm. In matters of significant social action, the forces opposing change are powerful and deeply rooted. They have little respect for adversaries who lack staying power.

2. **Start at the Beginning of the Process**

Too often individuals and citizen groups jump on the bandwagon when a bill is midway through the legislative process. While it is better to be involved rather than not at all, citizens who become involved at the beginning stand a much better chance of victory than those who enter the process well after it has begun.

3. **Focused Action**

Select a limited number of clearly defined targets and hit them hard. Among the most familiar weaknesses of citizen action are the diffusion of energy resources over too many targets, the brave but trivial effort, and the failure to tackle **concrete, tangible, achievable** goals. Citizen action scattered enthusiastically in all directions changes nothing. The accomplishment of significant change requires clear-cut targets and a massing of energy and resources. Roche suggests that groups handle an issue or piece of legislation a year.

4. **A Professional Cutting Edge**

Another weakness of the citizen in political action is unwillingness to acquire a grasp of the processes of government. Too often she can't be bothered with the grimy machinery by which the public business gets done. She is content to leave that to the "technicians." But people who control the course of events leave nothing to the "technicians." Often they **are** the technicians.

Part of the reason for these failures of high minded citizens is self-indulgence. They feel so noble just fighting "the good fight" that they find reward even in defeat. They seem to believe, if even uncounsciously, that high mindedness is a substitute for professional skill in doing battle. No wonder they lose so often.

5. **Public Information**

Effective communication is the most powerful single weapon of the public interest lobby. The special interest lobby usually works behind closed doors. The citizen's lobby must seek out and translate into clear language what the public needs to know on any given issue. The story must be told in the mass media. The issue must be dramatized. If the public is apathetic, it must be aroused. If there is already public indignation, it must be channeled.

6. **Alliances**

Alliances must be formed with other citizen groups. Unlike the institutional side of our national life, which has become increasingly monolithic, citizen action expresses itself through innumberable channels. New citizen groups sprout like blades of grass after a spring rain. And they are of little value in fighting major battles of social change unless those with common objectives work together.

A citizen group should also make the most of allies within the institution it is trying to affect. People within institutions often want to improve institutions and welcome the hand of a citizen group.

7. **Membership as Cadre**

The citizen's group should treat itself and its membership as a cadre, not as a bloc in the electoral sense. The goal is not vast numbers but an active membership that multiplies its effectiveness by reaching out into the community. It is odd but true that many groups that profess an interest in action are not in fact organized for action. Some, though asserting an interest in action, are organized essentially for study and discussion, or education, or organizational housekeeping, ego-gratifying committee chores, internal politics and the interminable passing of resolutions. Most citizen organizations either talk themselves to death or bureaucratize themselves into a state of paralysis. It is a devil of a job to get action out of an organization that isn't designed for action.

8. **The Middle**

Significant change depends on reaching the middle range of opinion.

Date	Legislative Step	Action Required of Us	Key People to Contact	How to Contact
	1. Researching the best way to get a bill sponsored	Make decisions: What should the bill say? Who (legislator) should sponsor the bill? When should the bill be introduced?	Legislative aide/commitee staff for: committee reports, general information on committee;	Phone/meeting
		How should strategy be developed? Which committee should it go to? Who will look most favorably on it? What is the committee like? Who are supporters? Opposers? How do we activate supporters/neutralize opposition?	newspaper for information on committee issue;	Visit
			legislative directories;	Library Research
		Do a head count of the committee. Ask each one if he will vote for or against.	All members	Phone/meeting
	2. Getting a bill written	Impress legislators with the need for the bill.	Individual legislator and/or the legislative or committee aide	Meeting
		Compile evidence on the need for the bill in legislative packet.	Meet with other possible supporters and those who can provide evidence of need for bill.	Meeting
	3. Getting the bill through subcommittee	Get the leadership to endorse the bill or at least not oppose it.	Leadership through your legislator	Attend hearings, provide written information (legislative packet).
		Have key people speak for the bill at hearings.		
		Be ready to accomodate amendments.		
	4. Getting bill through Committee	Work with subcommittee designee to develop strategy.	Leadership through your legislator and committee staff	Meeting
		Work to get the leadership to endorse.	People to testify	More legislative packets (updated)
		Be ready to accomoxiate amendments.		
	5. Mark up of the bill	Meet with aides to get bill written in your favor.	Right aides	Meeting/phone
	6. Getting bill thru full legislative body	Hold a strategy meeting	Aide, Leadership of bill	Meeting/phone
	7. Executive passage	Gather public support	Supporters, media	Cards, letters, calls
		Be ready to accomodate amendments.	Executtive aides	Meeting/phone
		Contact Executive office		
		Be ready to accomodate amendments.		

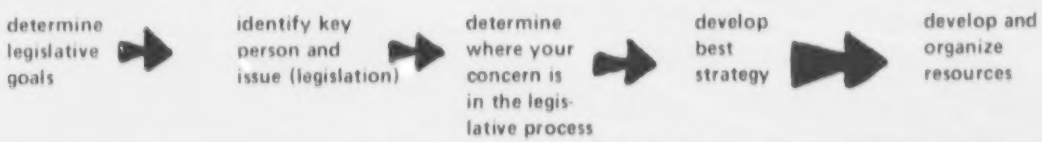
Steps in the Lobbying Process

The lobbyist's desire always is to demonstrate to the lawmaker that (1) the arguments put forth by the lob lobbying organization are valid, and (2) they are supported by the organization's membership. The lobbyist is not necessarily concerned with presenting all sides of the issue: just his own. The members of Congress do not expect a balanced presentation. Others are presenting the other side.

Any public or private lobbyist proceeds in the following manner. First, one must have an **issue** to lobby. The issue may be the passage or blockage of a bill or resolution, the appointment or non-appointment of an official, or some other decision. The decision must be made by some **target official** or set of officials: a state representative, a U.S. senator, a city councillor or school committee person. A key element to planning this is an understanding of the entire **legislative process** that you must go through and **where it is you currently stand in the process.** Based on this information, you must develop a **plan of attack**, deciding the best approach or technique to use. Finally, you must have the organizational **resources** to make the lobbying effort successful.

The rest of this chapter will take you through the basic elements that make up the lobbying process. You will start by clearly stating and analyzing your lobbying goal; that is, what, in general, you want from lobbying.

The process will look something like this:


determine legislative goals
identify key person and issue (legislation)
determine where your concern is in the legislative process
develop best strategy
develop and organize resources

Use this page to determine where you are and what yet must be done in your lobbying effort. Fill out the chart, using the following sections.

The goal I am working on is	The legislator I will be lobbying is The piece of legislation I want passed is	We are at the following stage in the legislative process: ·writing legislation ·subcommittee ·committee ·mark-up ·full House ·full Senate ·Joint Committee ·Executive	After considerable thought, I have determined that the best lobbying technique(s) is/are: ·face-to-face interview ·phone call ·letter writing ·personal visits testifying at a hearing ·mass letter writing ·postcard writing ·group lobbying ·lobbying other groups to lobby ·petitions ·telegrams	Our resources are: Who What When
For more information, see p. 72.	For more information, see p. 72.	For more information, see p. 73.	For more information, see p. 84.	For more information, see p. 89.

Lobbying Planning Guide

1. Define Your Goals

The most common goal of lobbying in citizen groups is to influence the vote of one's own representatives as well as other key representatives whose position in the legislative leadership makes them particularly influential (for example, the speaker of the house, the chairpeople of various committees). Usually, you'll want to influence an undecided person to vote your way; sometimes you may wish to get a representative to provide more aggressive leadership on an issue, or to lobby his colleagues.

Quite often another goal is to educate the public, which could also influence the vote or actions of various elected officials. This is more of a long-range goal and is difficult to use when one is in a "reactive" mode—even though it is probably more effective in the long run. "Reactive" organizing usually influences only one piece of legislation, while public education lobbying can influence a number of pieces of legislation.

Try asking these questions to help you set your lobbying goals:

—Which goal is more appropriate for you at this point?

—Influencing an elected official?
—Weakening the opposition?
—Public education?

—Which people from which offices do you want to lobby?

—How do you know these officials or people are the proper ones to approach?

2. Identify Key Legislators and Legislation

Public interest lobbying requires a thorough knowledge of the facts. What are the issues in a controversy? What is the opposition's view? Most importantly, what does the particular representative you are trying to lobby think about the issue? Sometimes you will have to do the research before you can begin to lobby; often groups or individuals will be able to provide you with much of this information.

—What is the elected official's stand on an issue right now? (To find out, you could ask the official, check with the official's aide, check newspaper articles, etc)

—How firm is the official's stand?

—What is influencing that stand? (constituency? pressure from colleagues? pressure from his political party? lobbyists?)

—if you want the official to do more than she is doing, what does the person need to know to change her position.

—Are you sure that your piece of legislation or other concern will deal with your issue that effectively? How do you know?

–Whom do you want to lobby? Do you deal directly with the legislator or with an aide?

–How do you know that this person is the right person?

–Why would she favor your issue? How do you know?

–Why would he disfavor your issue? How do you know?

–How does this person relate to your type of lobbying?

3. Understand the Legislative Process

Each governmental body has a step-by-step decision-making process for accomplishing its work. Many of these steps are open to lobbying. Listed below are the major decision-making steps of: 1. Congress (House and Senate); 2. the state legislatures (House and Senate); 3. county government and local legislative bodies (city councils, boards of aldermen, selectmen).

Federal.

What follows are things you should know about congressional legislation. Refer to the accompanying chart in order to follow the seven steps in the legislative process.

STEP 1: A Legislator's Aides. Perhaps the most important people to lobby are the 11,000 staff assistants working for the many committees and subcommittees in both the House and the Senate.

Because there is much work for an elected official to do, his staff is given considerable responsibility. A U.S. representative has an average of nine staffers in Washington, while a senator averages about 20.

The personal staff usually consists of:

–an administrative assistant (the representative's or senator's aide);
–a press secretary;
–a personal secretary;
–correspondence secretaries to answer mail;
–case workers to handle constituent problems;
–a press department;
–a legislative staff. The legislative staff of a representative is often limited to only one full-time legislative aide, while that of a senator is usually comprised of three or four. The chief legislative aide is usually the number two person on the totem pole.

–Simple resolutions concern matters which affect only the operations of one house and are considered by that body only.

The role of committees: Once a bill is introduced, it is **given a number** and then referred to the committee having jurisdiction over that legislation, and in turn to the appropriate subcommittee for initial consideration.

There are now 15 standing committees in the Senate and 22 in the House, plus various special and select committees.

If the subject of a bill spans jurisdiction of two or more committees, the bill may be jointly referred to more than one committee. **Successive referral**, the most common action, requires one committee to act on the bill before another begins consideration.
After a referral to a committee, most bills die a quiet death. They are simply placed on the committee's legislative calendar and never heard from again. For example, 12,800 bills were introduced in both houses during 1977; less than 1,000 had been reported out by committee at year's end, and only 210 had become law. Once a two-year congressional term ends, any bill that has not become law must be reintroduced if the sponsor wants it to be considered again.

STEPS 3 and 4: How Commmittees Are Organized. Committees form subcommittees and adopt rules governing meeting times, quorum requirements, proxy votes, etc. Members of each standing committee are selected by party caucuses (except for the Rules Committee in the House, which is selected by the Speaker subject to caucus approval).

Assignments to key committees are one of the most important rewards a political party bestows on its members.

Within each committee, the ratio of Democrats to Republicans reflects proportionately the number of Democrats and Republicans in each house.

Within a committee, the chairperson is the dominant figure. While traditionally selected by seniority, in recent years newer members have managed to make the selection the subject of the full House or Senate.

Committee chairpeople usually control which bills are considered by the committee, and determine what will probably happen to a piece of legislation and how fast it will happen. The same rules of thumb apply to subcommittees and subcommittee chairpeople. The fate of legislation often depends on who has introduced it—the president, the chairperson, a subcommittee leader, other members of a committee or a special interest group. Often, a great degree of public support for a bill is vital for its passage.

Once a committee decides to act on a bill, it will make a formal request for the Administration views and often requests a report from the General Accounting Office (which acts as a watchdog agency).

Public hearings will then be held for one or two days. Although hearings are usually held to consider the various bills, they may also be held to get the Administration's views on important general areas, to monitor government programs or government agencies (these are called oversight hearings), or to obtain public opinion on an issue.

While the public's opportunity to present oral testimony in some types of hearings may be limited, most committee hearings are structured to give the public an opportunity to testify. This is an excellent chance to lobby. **Organizations should get on the mailing lists of committees considering legislation in their interest areas in order to receive hearing notices, which inform the public of the date, time and place of the hearings and explain how to make requests to testify in person or in writing.**

In addition to the personal staff, there are staffs for every Congressional committee and most subcommittees. Many of these aides provide direct assistance to members and their personal staffs as well as fulfilling their committee responsibilities.

Committee staff work is more specialized than personal staff duties, permitting aides to become more knowledgeable about a subject. It is also more consistently rewarding because committees are the workhorses of the legislative process. While personal legislative aides are often given free reign to initiate and pursue legislative ideas, it is the committee aides who process a raw legislative idea into a refined bill and then work at modifying that bill to improve it and to gather support for it. In addition, the committee staff has a major role in planning hearings, selecting witnesses, and preparing questions for the witnesses. As a result of the demands of the position, committee aides are generally older, more experienced and better paid than those who work on personal staffs. They are also very important people to know.

STEP 2: The Lawmaking Process.

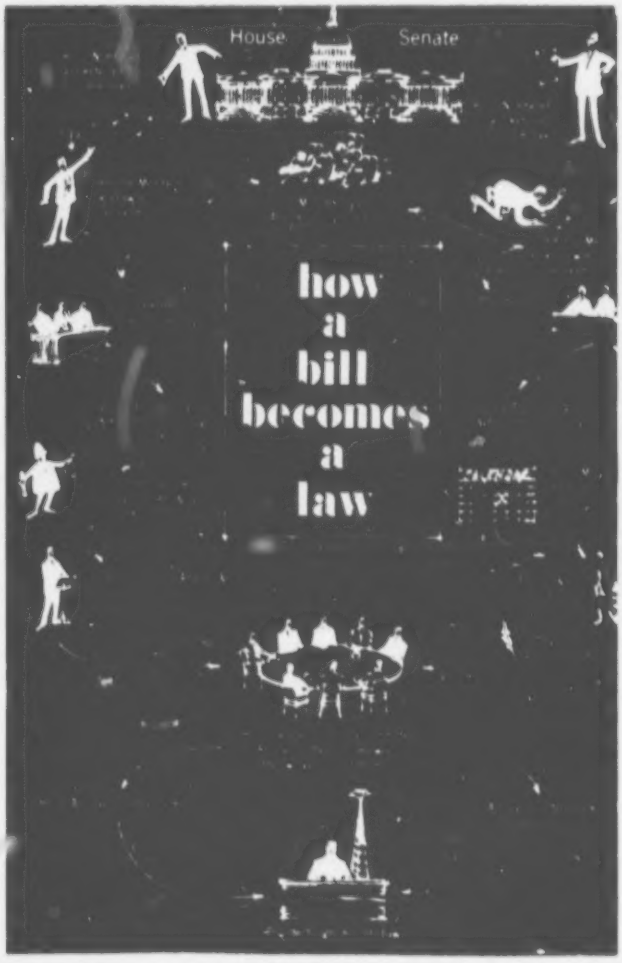
Ways that a bill can be introduced:

- –The president may ask a member to introduce a bill.
- –Federal agencies may initiate the legislation.
- –A member of the legislature may introduce a piece of legislation after talking with constituents, etc.
- –Staff assistants may draw up legislation
- –Committee or subcommittee staff may draw up legislation based on committee or subcommittee hearings, though the legislation will be entered under the name of a legislator.
- –Organizations or special interest groups may approach a member of Congress with legislative ideas expressed in a policy paper or drafted into bill language. If the member is interested in the proposal, she may choose to introduce the legislation as is or with modifications.

How a bill is introduced: Introducing a bill is relatively simple. A member simply hands the proposed legislation (with signature on it) to a clerk. In the Senate, an explanation of the bill is introduced into the Congressional Record.

Types of bills that might be introduced:

- –A joint bill: a representative and a senator may jointly sponsor a bill, introducing it at the same time. In addition, members can have their names added as cosponsors after a bill has been introduced.
- –A joint resolution is very similar to a bill and carries equal legal weight, and may originate in either house. It is commonly used to propose amendments to the Constitution or to make limited appropriations for a special purpose. All joint resolutions must be approved by the president.
- –Concurrent resolutions do not have the force of law and are used to make or amend rules applicable to both houses or to express the sentiment of Congress on a particular issue.



from Congress and You, Donald Bacon

STEP 5: Mark-Up and Reporting. Committee members go over legislation line by line, often making substantial changes or adding amendments. These sessions are usually open to the public, although no public participation is permitted. Following this a vote is taken. If the vote is favorable, the bill is reported. The committee will sometimes rewrite the bill with a new number.

If you are trying to understand a particular federal program, it is useful to read the committee report. Committee reports are a very valuable part of the legislative history of a bill. A report can turn the confusion-inducing "legalese" of the bill into a comprehensive description of the legislative intent. Also, subtleties of the bill which were not apparent in the formal language may become apparent from reading the report.

Getting a Bill On or Off the Calendar. Just because a bill is reported favorably out of committee does not mean that it will be considered. Committee chairpeople must consult with, and hopefully gain the support of, congressional leaders to keep a bill alive and moving.

If a bill is reported in the House, it is usually sent to the Rules Committee, which determines whether floor debate will be allowed and the length of time for this debate. The Committee's decision is called a rule, which is placed on the House Calendar with the bill itself and given a Calendar number. Revenue sharing appropriation bills are placed on the Union Calendar. The Senate does not have a Rules Committee review.

In both houses, bills are "called up" for floor action in numerical order. Since some bills are more important than others, they may be considered early by a two-thirds vote of the House Rules Committee, or by a special request made by the Committee chair on certain days. In the Senate, a majority vote is needed to get the bill considered.

STEP 6: Action on the Floor. When debate is scheduled, the committee chair or designee acts as a floor manager for the bill, while the ranking member of the minority party or designee acts as a floor manager for the opposition. Extensive parliamentary procedures govern debating and voting.

While the final work of Congress is done on the floors of the House and Senate, the average floor attendance is no more than 12 in the House, and six in the Senate.

THOMAS P. O'NEILL JR.

Back in their offices or in committee hearings, congresspeople have no way of keeping track of the debate. Though some send staff in to listen, most simply wait for a system of buzzers to summon them for a vote. Somewhere between when the buzzer sounds and when they reach the floor, the members must find out what the issue is all about and then decide how to vote. On all but the most important issues, both information and decisions are based on brief conversations with staff aides or colleagues.

Following Bills in Progress. The **Digest of Public General Bills** lists in numerical order all the bills introduced as well as other useful Capitol Hill information. The **Digest** is published five or more times each session, with supplements. It costs $9 a year and is available from the Superintendent of Documents.

If you already know the status of a bill, you can call the House Bill Status Office, (202) 225-1772, to find out the date of introduction, the sponsors and cosponsors, the committee hearings and other pertinent facts. Always use the bill's number, if you know it.

You can also learn of other bills introduced in similar subject areas and their current status. For information, write to the Committee on House Administration, 3648 HOB Annex No. 2, Washington, D.C., 20515; or call the specific committee; or call the representative or senator who sponsored the bill. Try to talk with the staff person responsible for working on the bill.

Copies of bills, committee reports, conference reports and public laws are available from either the Senate Documents Room, Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20510, or the House Documents Room, Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20510. There is a four- to seven-day waiting period for this information.

To keep abreast of legislation, stay in close contact with national organizations within the field. Find out if they lobby. Find out if they publish newsletters and, if so, subscribe. Get to know the staff member most responsible for legislation.

Pay close attention to the **Congressional Record**. The **Congressional Record** comes out daily, costs $45 a year, and is available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. It is also available in most libraries. Although the **Congressional Record** is not a word for word description of what is said, it is considered the basic source of information on congressional activity.

To use the **Congressional Record**, become familiar with its organization. Leaf through it, looking at the **"Introductions of Bills and Joint Resolutions"** (usually in the first few pages of each section) and all subheadings. Review the **"Daily Digest"** at the end of the **Record**, which summarizes highlights of the day, alerting you to agreements, amendments, final votes, and important bills cleared by committees. Announcements of committee meetings and hearings are also listed, although information from committee meetings must be obtained from committee staff.

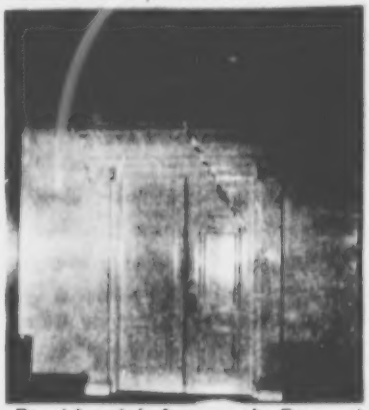
Develop an internal card file divided by subject area. Whenever something important happens in the **Record**, note date, congressperson and summary of remarks.

For almost immediate information on Congress, the four congressional cloak rooms provide phone messages, revised throughout the day, on floor debate, scheduling and voting.

When a bill is passed by one house, it is then sent to the other, where it is usually referred once again to a committee. There may be more hearings and a favorable committee report, or the committee may decide to take no action whatsoever, in which case the proposal dies.

Even after both houses approve a bill, the legislative process has not ended. If there are any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, and usually there are, a **conference committee** is appointed from members of both houses, who iron out the differences. Conferees can only debate issues of disagreement between bills and exceed the recommendations of the past bills.

When agreement is reached, a conference report and a final version of the bill are presented to both houses for approval. Only when this approval is given does the bill get sent to the president.



STEP 7: Presidential Approval. Once the president has received the bill passed by Congress, he may:

- –sign it into law;
- –veto it within 10 days and return it with a statement of his objections to the house which originated the legislation;
- –allow the bill to become law without a presidential signature by failing to act on it within 10 days;
- –pocket veto, if Congress adjourns before the 10 day period has elapsed.

If a bill is vetoed by the president while Congress is in session, two-thirds of the members of the house which originated the legislation can override the veto. If they do, the bill then goes to the other house, where a two-thirds vote will turn the bill into law without the presidential signature.

Copies of committee hearings, prints and legislative calendars are available from the committee itself. You can call the committee, or send a written request with a self-addressed mailing label. Committee hearings, prints and legislative calendars take at least two months to be published. For a transcript of all hearings at the committee office, call the White House Records Office, (202) 456-2226.

State. Below is the process a bill goes through before becoming a state law in Massachusetts.* Similar information for your state can be obtained from your state legislature, League of Women Voters, or other citizen groups like CPPAX.

Petitions are normally filed not later than the 1st Wednesday in December for consideration in the following calendar year. A citizen may file a petition through a legislator. The legislator may file the petition in her own name, or if he or she does not wish to be directly associated with it, may file it "by request." Bills may have multiple sponsors; seeking the most effective sponsorship prior to filing can be very important for later strategy.

- Once the Legislative session begins in January, the filing deadline rule may be suspended by a four-fifths majority vote of each branch. In practice this occurs only when supported by the leadership or in an emergency.

- The Governor may file petitions at any time; municipal executives may file "home rule" petitions affecting only their community at any time.

STEPS 1 and 2: Preliminary Steps. During December and the first weeks after the Legislature convenes in January, petitions are assigned a number, printed, and assigned to a joint committee.

- Bills sponsored by a Senator will be given a Senate number (such as S.411); those sponsored by a Representative will be given a House number (such as H.3542).

- For 1977 there are 23 joint standing committees, plus eight separate House or Senate special purpose committees.

- Joint committees include both House and Senate members, with equal status. There are usually 21 members of each committee. There are two chairmen, one a Senator and the other a Representative; nominally the Senator is "in charge" but in practice some committees are really run by the House Chairman, some by the Senate Chairman.

STEPS 3 and 4: Committee Hearings. Beginning in late January, each joint committee schedules public hearings for the petitions assigned to it. The bulk of public hearings are set for the period between late January and early April.

- Committee sessions are structured so that a number of related petitions are heard at the same session. These daily sessions continue until the scheduled list for the day is completed.

- Interested citizens may speak for or against a petition. Petitions are normally heard in numerical order, with "proponents" first and "opponents" following. Procedure is relatively informal: citizens merely stand up and speak when their petition number is called by the chairman. Occasionally at crowded hearings a sign-up list will be circulated, or "experts" called early in the day. Legislators are allowed to come in and speak out of order, on any petition scheduled for that day.

STEP 5: Executive Sessions. Following the hearing, joint committees conduct an "Executive Session," to discuss and vote on what the committee recommendation or "report" will be. These sessions are now open to the public, who may observe but not speak.

—The committee has the power to recommend favorable "ought to pass" or unfavorable "ought not to pass." Committees can also combine several bills into a "committee rewrite," or make amendments.

—Committee reports on all normal bills must be completed and filed by the fourth Wednesday in April; petitions not acted upon are considered reported out negatively.

—If a bill requires state finances or pertains directly to an Executive Department, it will be sent to the Committee on Ways and Means.

STEP 6: Floor Action. Once reported out of committee executive session, petitions are properly referred to as "bills." Bills with House numbers usually go to the House floor; Senate numbers usually to the Senate floor first. A committee member is assigned to "carry" the report when it reaches the floor. The bill is scheduled for its "first reading" by being listed on the calendar. If the committee report is unfavorable, the question is to adopt the report of "ought not to pass" and thus kill the bill for the year. Such negative reports can be overturned by an individual legislator moving to "substitute the bill" instead of the negative report.

—On favorable reports "first reading" is essentially automatic by listing on the printed calendar and there is no debate.

—Debate and motions for substantive amendments are permitted during the second reading of the bill. A vote will be taken on passing the bill "to a third reading."

Voting. A voice vote is taken on all bills as called by the Speaker or Senate President. Often this is done extremely quickly, with few if any members actually voting. However, any legislator may doubt the vote and request a "standing vote," or may call for a "quorum." At the request of 30 House members (or as a courtesy) a roll call vote will be ordered.

On any vote, there may also be one move for "reconsideration"; if reconsideration prevails, it does not actually reverse the original vote, but merely allows the vote to be taken again.

After third reading, a bill must be passed "to engrossment." This involves another chance for debate and amendments, and usually occurs on a different day from "third reading." Following engrossment, the bill goes to the other chamber (e.g. Senate) for a repeat of these steps.

Bottlenecks. All bills successfully passed to a third reading are sent to the "Committee on Bills in the Third Reading." Supposedly this committee checks bills for legal form, repetition of existing legislation, constitutionality, etc. In practice, the committee is often used by the leadership and other individual members to hold up bills as part of a political strategy. Sometimes bills are referred to the "Ways & Means" or "Rules Committee" for similar political reasons. So-called "Study Committees" are also used to avoid direct passage or a direct opportunity for a floor vote. Finally, each year some bills simply "disappear" without formal action as required by the Rules.

Amendments made in the second branch must return for approval by the first. If House amendments disagree with Senate amendments, a "conference committee" can be appointed, but this happens infrequently. If no conference committee is appointed the bill is killed. Following engrossment in both Houses, a final "enactment" vote must also take place in each chamber. This is usually routine, but occasionally is used as a last-minute attempt to kill a bill.

STEP 7: Following House and Senate enactment, the bill goes to the Governor to be signed, vetoed, or returned with amendments. Vetoed bills can still become law if the veto is overridden by a two-thirds majority in both houses.

County Government. The most universal unit of local government in the United States is the county, and in the rural areas of the country it is the most important unit of grass-roots government available to the people. All states except Alaska, Connecticut and Rhode Island provide for county government.

Although county government has little importance in New England with its traditional emphasis on town meetings, it has moderate importance in the Mid- and Far West, and extreme importance in the South. The 3,044 counties in the United States often serve as the administrative arms for state programs.

Some of the services provided by local government (counties, cities, towns, townships) are:

- –tax assessment and collection;
- –educational services;
- –election administration;
- –judicial administration;
- –public record keeping;
- –marriage licenses, occupation licenses and other permits;
- –hospitals and public health facilities;
- –agricultural advice;
- –welfare programs;
- –maintenance of roads;
- –parks, swimming pools, golf courses and other athletic facilities;
- –medical examiner services;
- –libraries and other opportunities for cultural enrichment;
- –police and fire protection;
- –public utilities.

The average citizen in the United States will find that there are usually five or six different types of local government which provide these services. In most states you will find counties, cities, school districts, park districts, townships and water control districts.

Local Government. Because local governments vary so much, it will be up to the reader to research her own government structure to help determine a viable process for working on the system.

Here are five basic forms of government:

Mayor/Councillor form. Here an elected council or board serves as the legislative (lawmaking) body. A separately elected head of government (mayor, president, chairperson, etc.) has special powers which may range from ceremonial duties to full-scale authority for the daily operation of the government.

Some cities and towns have **strong mayor** local governments, where the mayor selects the department heads and makes major decisions on the budget.

Other cities and towns have **strong councillor** governments, where the councillors select department heads and make major budgetary decisions.

Mayor/Councillor/Manager form. In this case, a legislative body or council (city council, board of aldermen, selectmen, freeholders) is responsible for making policy; the mayor is a member of the council and is recognized as the community's political leader; the administration of the government is the responsibility of a chief administrator or manager, appointed by the council.

Commission form. A board of elected commissioners serves as the elected body; individually, each commissioner heads one or more administrative departments.

Town Meeting form. In this case, qualified voters convene at an annual (or more often, if necessary) meeting to make basic policy decisions and to choose a board of selectmen; the selectmen and elected officials carry out the policies established by the community.

Representative Town Meeting form. Here the voters elect a large number of citizens to represent them at the town meeting; all citizens may attend the meeting and participate in the debates, but only the representatives may vote.

Town Meeting.* Almost all towns in New England hold their annual town meetings sometime between February and May. The date of the town meeting and the subjects ("Articles") to be considered are stated in the "**Warrant**" for the meeting, which must be publicized not later than seven days before the date of the meeting. Ordinarily the Warrant is circulated 10 to 30 days before the meeting. In general only the election of town officers is done through a conventional election. All of the town's "legislative" activity takes place at town meetings, and "referenda questions" are part of that process. With some special exceptions, this applies equally to towns having "open" meetings, at which all registered voters may participate fully, and to towns having a "representative" form of town meeting, where only elected members may vote.

In either case, if 10 or more registered voters of the town request that an issue be inserted as an Article in the Warrant for the Annual town meeting, the selectmen must add the Article to the Warrant (as provided by Ch. 39, sec. 10 of Massachusetts General Laws). Although the law speaks broadly of "all subjects" requested by petitioning voters, town officials in some communities have been known to refuse to include a requested Warrant Article because the town lacks the power to carry out the action contemplated by the proposed article. Thus, an article proposing that a state highway which passes through the town be discontinued might be rejected since the town has no power, on its own initiative, to discontinue a state-regulated highway. On the other hand, a Warrant article proposing that the town petition the appropriate state agency to discontinue the highway would not be objectionable, on these grounds at least. Under the provisions of Home Rule, towns do have the power to make a wide variety of decisions regarding the functioning of municipal government. Thus articles to create a new town Department, or to adopt rent control (in towns over 50,000 population), or to change town by-laws would all be consistent with the normal activities of town meetings. If so specified, passage of such questions would be legally binding. Articles may also require expenditure of municipal funds, and even require the raising of funds through taxation or bond issues. However, some fiscal questions are handled differently; some may require a two-thirds vote, or state legislative approval after the town acts.

Town officials holding a rigorous view of the legislative process have also been known to reject Warrant articles calling for a record of the town meeting's opinion on public issues, such as the frequently-attempted resolution to advise or "memorialize" the State Legislature or the federal Congress that the town would like an end to the War in Vietnam. Resolutions of that sort, of course, are adopted with great frequency by legislative bodies all over the country; and a rejection of a Warrant article proposing that kind of town meeting vote generally reflects an opposition to the proponents' actual position on the question, or a desire to avoid "divisive" debate at the town meeting.

If you wish to present an issue of that kind and you have reason to think the town officials would refuse to enter your Warrant article, you can convert many such issues into a form which will necessitate legislative action by the town. If you have such a problem, do not propose a resolution expressing the town meeting's opposition to the adoption of the hepatica as the State Flower of Massachusetts. Instead, propose that the town accept gifts from interested citizens to be expended in eradicating that noxious growth within the town borders and directing the selectmen to notify the Governor and other appropriate state officials of the

TOWN OF AMHERST ORGANIZATION CHART

town's action. (By proposing to make a gift to the town on condition that the town undertake to use the gift in a particular way you propose both an action which the town has the power to take and one which requires a traditional "legislative" decision, without raising the extraneous questions involved in a proposal to spend tax money.)

If you are interested in going forward with a town meeting issue, note the following specific items with care:

Filing dates. The selectmen have the power to "close" the Warrant well before the date of the town meeting. Be certain to get all filing dates from your town hall. Remember that meetings themselves often are continued to dates in addition to the first meeting.

Forms. The state statute normally requires that the request be made in writing, but does not prescribe any form of petition. Your town may have established one for local use, and you should check with your town hall. If there is no local form, all your petition needs to say is: "We the undersigned residents and registered voters of the town of hereby request that the article set forth below be included in the Warrant for the annual town meeting to be held on , 1975."

Although the law requires only 10 signatures, you must be sure that they are signatures of registered voters and that the "residence, with street and number, if any" is included by each voter signing the petition. To guard against errors, and against the possibility that a voter may not sign an acceptable form of her/his name, you should get 15 or 20 signatures. If your proposal is the kind which is likely to be opposed by your town officials, you may want to collect a large number of signatures, to demonstrate the strength of your position in the town.

Nothing in the statute specifies the form in which your proposed Warrant article should be stated. Be sure you write your article in normal English; avoid fancy legalese. Take a look at last year's annual town meeting Warrant (in your town library, or the clerk may still have extra copies); try to follow that style.

Spokesperson. Remember that it is not enough to merely have your article printed in the Warrant: Someone must stand ready to present a motion when the article comes to the floor. In a town having a representative town meeting form of government, that may mean you need to have a friendly town meeting member. The statute (Chapter 43A) provides that any registered voter in the town may speak at the representative town meeting, subject to rules adopted by the voting members. Therefore, it may be possible to get permission to present your motion, if you cannot find a cooperative town meeting member. Any motion intended for presentation on the floor should also be in clear and simple language.

Campaign finance laws. Some of the new state laws regarding campaign receipts and expenditures could apply to "questions submitted to the voters," particularly those involving open town meetings. Consult state and local officials about filing requirements if you plan to form a committee which will raise and expend money.

Local Government Planning Guide

How does your local government work? Who governs? How? Who's responsible for what? (Draw an organizational chart.)

What are the steps in getting a warrant or legislative measure voted on?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

What lobbying approach should we use for each measure?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Design a time line to help you get your warrant passed.

Step 1 Step 2 Step 3 Step 4 (etc.)

Today — Decision date

Other pertinent questions:

- Who are the economic leaders of your community?
- What are their primary interests?
- How do they lobby?
- Are your issues opposed to or in agreement with theirs? Explain.

4. Develop Your Lobbying Techniques

You have now thought through your goals, researched who, it is you want ot target and what it is you want them to hear. All this infromation should lead you to the type of lobbying you should now try. Read over the list of lobbying approaches presented below. Each approach includes some guidelines and a way to practice that approach. Keep in mind your own specific situation with its own specific needs, then choose the best technique or series of techniques to fit your situation.

The Face-to-Face Interview. As a rule it is easier to get an appointment with an elected official at their home office than it is at the state capital or in Washington because word that she is in town can get around slowly. However, if you are approaching the person with a threatening issue, with the potential for confrontation, you may get the runaround. Be prepared with other tactics. Although usually it's very easy to see a representative's or senator's aide, it is naturally not quite as effective.

If the person is a state or U.S. senator or representative, or if in a large city the person is a city councillor, arrange a visit with him at his home district office. Find out when she's in her home district. Does she keep regular hours? Does she maintain an office or work out of her home? Does she make appointmetns or are meetings strictly on a drop-in basis? Once you have planned your meeting, plan what you want to discuss. What is your goal? How are you going to accomplish it?

Letter Writing. The effectiveness of letter writing as a lobbying tool must be evaluated on several levels.

Public interest lobbyists have found that **individual letters** will rarely have a significant effect upon a legislator's decision to support or oppose a bill merely on the basis of the facts they reveal or the arguments they make. In cases where a single letter does have an effect, it's the author's identity and/or position, rather than his writing skills, that make the difference. Nevertheless there are ways to make your individual letters more effective.

Batches of letters, especially when each letter appears to reflect "genuine grass-roots sentiment," are carefully monitored by legislative assistants and used to inform a representative of the prevailing mood of the district. On state issues where the leadership has taken no position and the individual representative is uninterested, a relatively small number of letters (10 to 20) can determine a senator's or representative's position. On more controversial state issues, a larger number of letters (20 to 100) may be required. On the federal level, just 40 or 50 letters can often be enough to convince your legislator to vote your way.

Some things to consider: If you are writing to a federal senator or representative, you should be aware that few members have the time or desire to read all their mail, which they get at the rate of 1,000 to 2,000 pieces daily. Members do see the best of the day's mail—the correspondence from friends, important local citizens, major associations and supporters, and usually the most thoughtful legislation-oriented letters from ordinary interested citizens.

The style and length of your letter should vary depending on your purpose, but certain rules apply across the board. Here are some rules, suggested by members of Congress, for writing the kind of letter that has the best chance of reaching the mark:

1. Write the member at his office never at home. Like you, he treasures his hours away from the job, and resents any intrusions on his home life.

2. State your case as clearly and succinctly as you can. He may not have time or desire to plow through a long drawnout argument. A multi-paged letter depresses him, and he won't necessarily be impressed by the fact you spent a long time composing it. Try to limit your letter to one subject.

3. Direct, first person, factual accounts of your own experiences have the greatest impact.

4. Describe how the proposed legislation might affect your life, your community, your business and your family.

5. Be factual and fair with your subject matter. Don't use flagrant exaggeration. Avoid slogans and catch-phrases. Remember the person to whom you are writing knows something of the issues."Obvious overstatement can lose him," says Representative Wright, "and automatically dissolve his respect and regard for your judgement."

6. Don't insult, berate or threaten him, or impugn his motive. Don't try to buy his vote with a promise to support him in the next election; don't try to scare him with a threat to vote against him.

7. Don't impugn the motives of those who disagree with you on the issue. By definition, an issue must have at least two sides.

8. Compliment the Senator or Representative. If you approve of a vote he has cast or a statement he has made recently, tell him so. Congressional staffs (like other employes) know that a compliment improves the boss's disposition, and they are more likely to show him a letter containing a good word or two than a letter full of complaints.

9. Don't write too often. If you are interested in several issues or extremely interested in just one, space your letters for maximum impact. Every office has its "mail cranks," who feel compelled to state their opinion on every subject or issue. The frequent letting off of steam might do the writers some personal good, but their influence in the congressional office is nil.

10. Don't ask for more than your Representative or Senator can deliver. One Congressman, for instance, was told by a letter writer to "kick the Russians out of Czechoslovakia." He is only one man, and, in an institution where seniority is everything, he may not be especially influential. He has only one vote in his committee or on the floor. Demanding that he have a certain bill released from the grip of some committee or personlly stop some bill from passge is unreasonable.

11. Know your legislator. Read his biography in the *Congressional Directory*. Follow his actions by reading your newspapers. Has he been sympathetic to your views on this issue in the past? To what committees does he belong, and how much seniority does he have? What has he said on this subject recently?

—from **Congress and You**, pp. 102, 103.

Personal Visits. Washington-based representatives of business, professional and civic associations visit members of Congress on a regular basis. Their entree is that they are representing and speaking for thousands or even millions of individuals. If you represent only yourself, it is somewhat more difficult to see a member.

One U.S. representative suggested that, if an individual goes into his Congresswoman's office and tells the secretary that she is "visiting from the district," she will see the person almost immediately, regardless of what she is working on at that time. It is becoming increasingly harder for individuals to make appointments. Strangers seeking appointments may wait days or weeks to see a particularly busy U.S. senator or House committee chairman.

Testifying. If you are going to testify before a committee:

—Locate hearing room and time.

—Leave your name with committee clerk to be called, if possible, stating your position for or against the bill. Otherwise, rise when chairman calls for more testifiers.

—Be on time but be patient. Members of the legislature will be heard first as a courtesy extended by the chairman, as will experienced lobbyists who are familiar to the chairman.

—Be accessible. If it is a large hearing, go to a seat near the front as your time to testify approaches.

—Know the contents of the bill thoroughly.

—Rise when called. Begin "Mr. Chairman," give your name, address and identify the organization you represent, if any. Address the committee only.

—State your position for or against the issue. Summarize your recommendation first and add explanation afterward. What is your special interest? How did you arrive at your conclusion? Who will benefit? Who will be hurt? Be brief. Keep to the subject.

—Re-state your recommendation. Thank the committee for listening. Submit your remarks in writing to the clerk, if possible. Your written statement may be the only detailed record available.

—Be confident and cooperative. Committee members are there to hear your viewpoints, not to defend their own. They have no reason to embarrass you, but they will ask questions to clarify points you make. Respond directly if you can; if you do not know the answer, say so. Do not regard difficult questions as a personal, hostile challenge. You may not question committee members, but the chairman may permit you to question him to clarify facts.

—Be prepared. Do not be repetitive. Repeat points made in previous testimony only to endorse them. The length of time allowed any speaker may be limited by the committee. If you can locate further information, wish to submit an amendment, or your spoken statement for the record, give it in writing to the clerk.

—When writing by letter, address Senators and Representatives as: The Honorable John Doe. The salutation, Dear Senator Doe, or for Representatives: Dear Mr. Doe.

—from the pamphlet, "How to Testify Before the New Hampshire Legislature," League of Women Voters of New Hampshire, 1975.

Art MacCannell

Look Dick!
See Jane Organize!
Workbook Cpf

Phone Calls. Phone calls are preferred by many public interest lobbyists; they take less time to arrange or implement, and yet provide the important personal touch. Consider when and where you want to contact your representative—a phone call to her office may receive a more friendly reception and cost less than one to the state capital or Washington, where the average elected official is usually overwhelmed with calls.

If you want to contact a federal elected official, you may find the telephone a less satisfactory means of communicating. Even if you manage to get the senator or representative on the line (and odds are strongly against it), she will probably not have all the information on the issue you want to discuss. You will be primed, and he may not be. In either case, he will be rushed. The best time to catch a member in the off-

Postcard Writing. Postcard lobbying is a tactic which some public interest groups have used successfully. For very little money, you may acquire some postcards and set up a table on a college campus or a town sidewalk or mall, and get people who pass by to sent postcards to their congressperson about your issue. Place a sign on your table to let people know your position; and provide a simple fact sheet that educates people to the issues and tells them to whom and where to send their cards. Public lobby groups claim that 25 postcards indicating support for a bill in the state legislature will make a difference. How much difference it will make on a federal level depends on the particular issue.

Telegrams. Because a telegram is generally shorter and contains less information than a letter, it has different uses. Its most effective use is during the last few days before a vote, to remind the congressperson that his constituents are still aware of the issue and are concerned with how he votes. You can send Personal Opinion Messages of 15 words to your congressperson or senator via Western Union for 90 cents anywhere in the country.

Some congresspeople who did not vote at all on the proposal may write to their constituents, "I supported the amendment," without mentioning that they did not actually vote for it. This ploy is partly a result of the non-record vote (a voice vote, one that is not recorded in the **State** or **Congressional Record**), but it is also a result of inadequate coverage by the legislative reporters for newspapers. The principal solution is to urge your local newspapers to have their state or Washington correspondents cover the response of your elected officials to your issues in depth, instead of relying on the wire service stories, which are too general to tell much of significance about local congresspeople. A few papers already do this well; most do not.

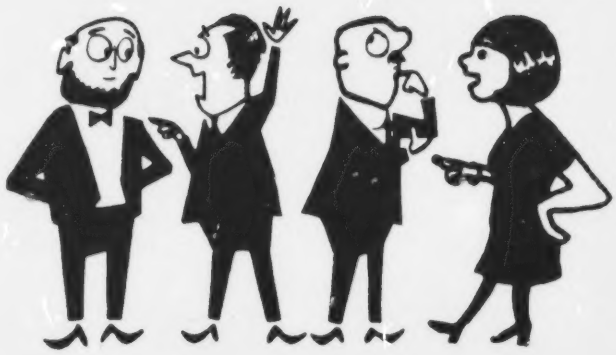
Petitions. In many states petitions can place almost any issue on the ballot for voters to decide, but the numbers of signatures of registered voters is usually very substantial. A petition to a federal representative designed to express collective sentiments certainly gets your message across, but does not rank as high as other forms of communication. As one member of Congress put it, "Normally, members of Congress attach greater significance to individually written letters than they do to petitions."

Probably the most valuable consequence of a petition drive is the visibility it gives to an issue, raising people's consciousness and introducing people to the organization. Media coverage of either the petition drive itself or the presentation of the petitions to an elected official is often easy to obtain and expands the public's awareness still further.

The effectiveness of petition drives on raising consciousness or bringing members into an organization can be measured by the types of involvement organizations can provide the petition signer.

Mass Letter Writing. Mass letter writing campaigns should be handled with some discretion. Members of Congress and their staff are mindful of mass letter campaigns and tend to judge them on the amount of effort exerted by each person writing the letter. A person's signature on a printed post card takes far less effort than an original letter. A form letter composed by an association—even if recopied by hand—likewise has minimum impact on Congress. There is a congressional rule of thumb that one original letter is worth 100 form letters.

Citizens should be aware that a congressperson's position may change as the bill itself is amended in the legislative process. Constituents frequently have one particular version of a bill in mind when they write, and often fail to understand that the bill they advocate or oppose might have been amended or dropped even while their letter was in transit to Washington.



Group Lobbying. Group lobbying can be very potent, particularly for citizens who don't carry the clout in the legislature that the rich businessmen or professionals carry. The more in your group the better. You can pursue all the direct lobbying tactics discussed above, but do so as a group. This will probably give you more visible success.

Lobbying Other Groups to Lobby. A related form of lobbying involves lobbying already existing groups to make your issue one of ther priorities. Are there other groups in your own town or campus that share your interests? Contact one of their leaders, and discuss your issue with them, urging them to support your issue and lobby your legislator. Make sure you have educated yourself about the position which their state or national affiliate may have taken so that you do not misinform them by mistake. Also, do some homework on their leaders, their issues and biases, and current projects. Do they have resources that you can use?

5. Develop and Organize Resources

Now that you know who is to be lobbied, where you are in the legislative process and what actions to take, it is time to identify resources and put them to use. The questions below will help you identify those resources and develop a framework out of which they can work.

What groups or individuals support my efforts? Supporters might include:

- –groups or individuals who normally support this type of issue;
- –those most directly affected by the issue;
- –political aspirants (Be careful–you may get manipulated.);
- –activists looking for a cause;
- –civic groups;
- –church groups;
- –political organizations;
- –student groups;
- –good government groups–League of Women Voters, Public Interest Research Gruops, etc.);
- –media (try finding a reporter who is deeply interested in your issue).

Who will contact these resources?

Effective organizing requires the interfacing of resources with specific events and tasks. In Column 1, write down your resources. In Column 2, write down all the lobbying tasks (hearings, letters, phone calls, research, etc.) and in Column 3, give them a date by when they must be performed. Now link up Column 1 with Columns 2 and 3.

	Column 1 Resources	Column 2 Tasks	Column 3 Dates
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			

After this is done, put your events on the appropriate places on the time line below, with names (or initials) of who will carry out those tasks.

Time line

Beginning date Ending Date

Role Play

Role Playing Your Lobbying Situation

Go through the planning questions in the first pages of this chapter. From them determine:

- –the issue;
- –an elected official to lobby;
- –an opposition;
- –the scene.

Now divide the group into three smaller groups.

Group 1 is the **government officials**, including the elected official to be lobbied, the person's aide and (according to the needs of the scene) perhaps some other key elected officials (such as a committee chairperson, the legislative leadership, etc.). The key person that you must lobby must make a decision on the issue based on the lobbying of the two groups below.

Group 2 is the **opposition**, lobbying as strongly as it can for its interests. (You may want to research the interests and approaches beforehand; try answering the questions on page from the opposition's point of view.)

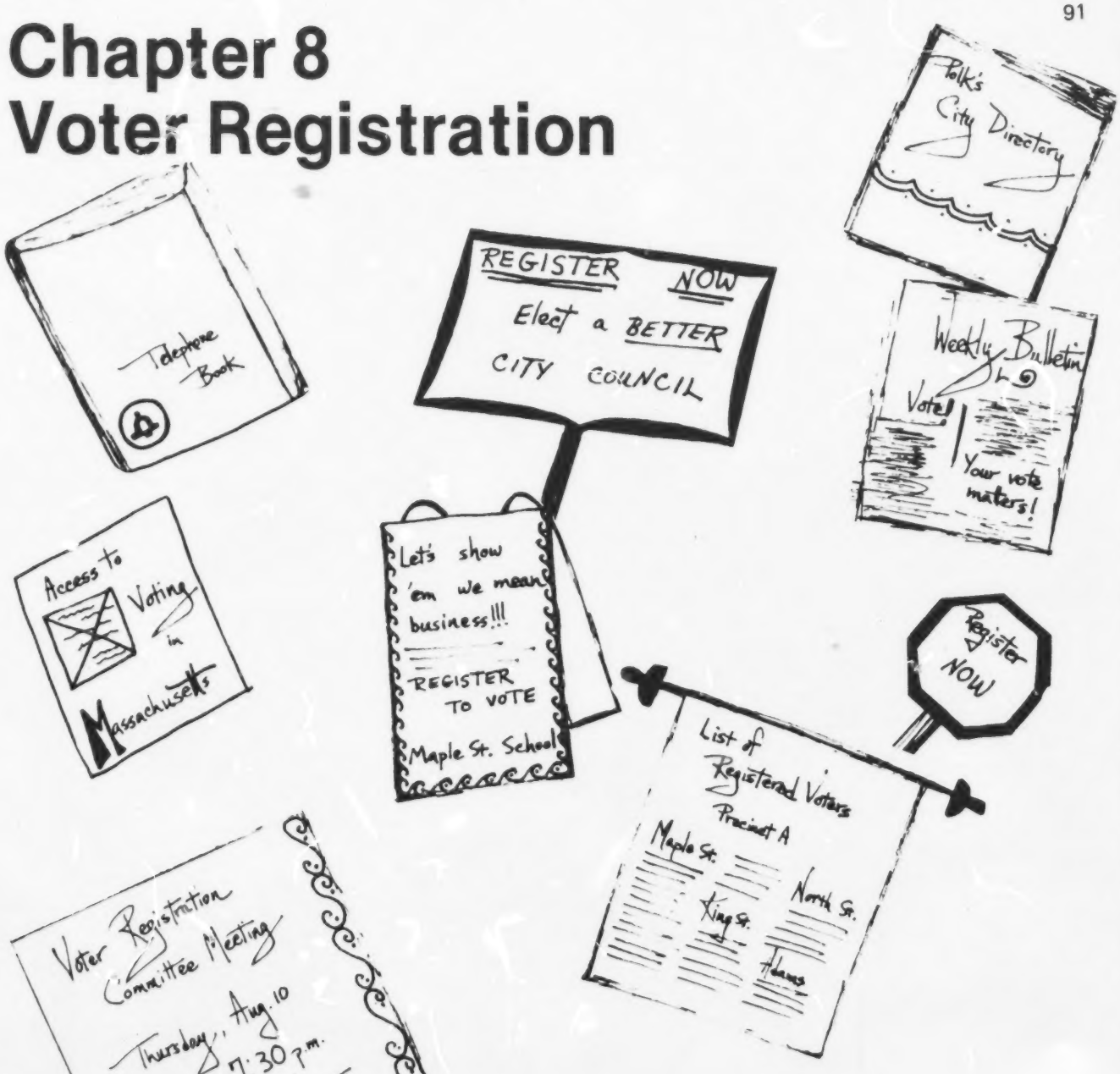
Group 3 is **your side**, lobbying as strongly as it can for your interests. Use your responses from page as background information.

Both Group 2 and Group 3 spend at least 15 minutes lobbying a person. Try following the steps your "real life" group must follow.

The key person in Group 1 must then make a decision.

Discuss the pros and cons of the lobbying; try the role play again if necessary.

Chapter 8
Voter Registration



History and Purposes

Voter registration is a tactic that has been used by many groups trying to influence government policy. The basic idea behind voter registration drives is to increase the voting power of a community. To undertake a voter registration drive you should use your local voter lists to determine who has **not** registered to vote, then contact these people and encourage them to register (through the mail, in person or by phone), perhaps even transporting them to registration centers. Voter registration drives can be used to:

—**increase voting power** of certain areas to elect or defeat an official or to pass or reject a referendum or initiative;

—**demonstrate** to existing governmental officials that they should take certain constituencies seriously;

—share political skills and consciousness throughout an area while **building a political organization;**

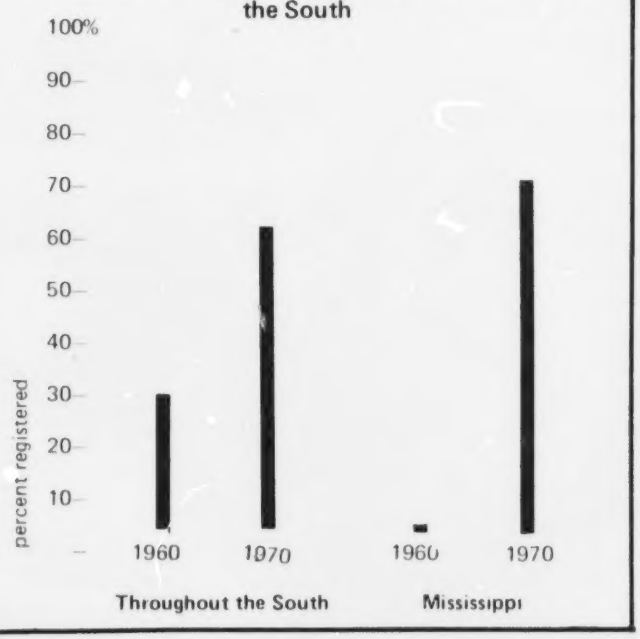
—**put pressure on government officials;**

—help **build political machines** in urban ghettoes.

While these purposes make sound political sense, the success of voter registration drives has been limited. The most successful voter registration drives took place in the South in the '60s. Local community leaders, national civil rights figures and Northern liberals dramatically changed the political climate of the South by helping blacks register to vote. Between 1960 and 1964, 700,000 blacks were registered. As Table 1 shows, the number of registered blacks in 1960 (1,122,000) represented only 33.1% of the total number of blacks. The hoopla caused by the drive pressured Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and by 1970 the percentage of blacks registered to vote had risen to 60.6% (2,110,000).

Clearly, the voter registration drive in the South had paid off. Nineteen black mayors had been elected, as well as 32 legislators, 250 black city councilmen, 90 school board members, 90 law enforcement officers and nearly 60 county officials. In Mississippi, 83 blacks held public office, and black activist Charles Evers mounted a strong campaign for governor. The black vote was decisive in the election of liberal mayors Moon Landrieu of New Orleans and Sam Massell of Atlanta.

Table 1 – Effects of Voter Registration Drive in the South



But voter registration drives in low-income areas have not been as successful of late, either in the South or the North. Voter registration drives in Newark, New Jersey, designed to help elect black mayoral candidate Gibson failed to reach the low-income black voter. A $25,000 grant from CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) to get out the black vote for black mayoral candidate Carl Stokes in Cleveland produced only 1,147 new voters at a cost of over $20 apiece. Similar types of results have occurred among Chicanos in E. Los Angeles and San Antonio, among blacks and Puerto Ricans in uptown Manhattan, and in several other major cities where voter registration drives have taken place.

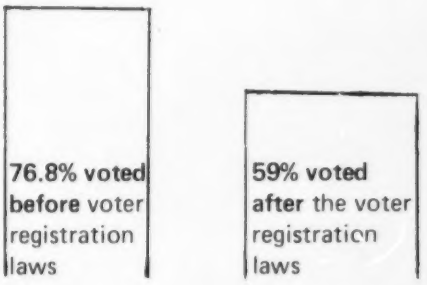
In addition, some political analysts believe that minority voter registration drives represent attempts by political parties to increase their strength while making only minor concessions to those groups. For instance, the War on Poverty (OEO) and Model Cities programs are sometimes regarded as examples of the Democratic party trying to build political machines in black communities in major urban areas in the '60s. With federal dollars coming into areas that city governments had not worked with in the past, those in power have suddenly found it to their advantage to allow minority patronage, bringing in votes and squelching more militant types of political activity.

Just how much the citizens of a low-income community will gain from a voter registration drive depends upon how much actual power they can take from the ongoing political machine.

Successes and Failures

The first question to ask concerning voter registration is, "Why must people register to vote in the first place?" Voter registration laws in the U.S. constitute a major exception to the practice in most democracies of placing the responsibility for updating the registration lists on the government, rather than on the individual.

Most voter registration laws were drawn up in the United States late in the 19th century, coinciding with the mass immigration of foreign-born newcomers to American cities, as well as with the move to disenfranchise blacks in the South. Although one of the purposes of the laws was to eliminate fraud by big city political machines, the final result was to place obstacles in the way of real social change. Between 1850 and 1900 the average turnout for presidential elections was 76.8%. Since voter registration requirements were introduced, turnout in presidential elections has averaged only 59%.



The institutional barriers to registration have included poll taxes and literacy tests, as well as infrequent and confusing dates and hours for registration. In addition, many extra-legal actions to make voting difficult have occurred over the years, including gun-carrying policemen who served as "volunteer challengers" in black communities during the '67 Cleveland mayoral election. Clearly, laws that would allow citizens to register at the same time that they vote would greatly increase participation in elections and end discrimination against the poor, students and minority groups.

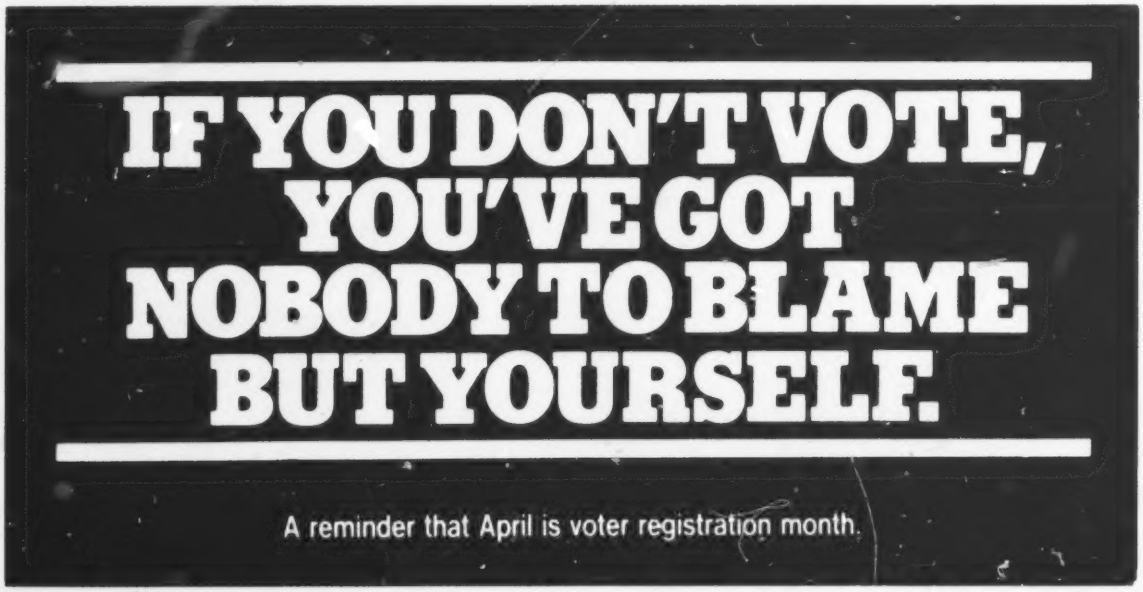
Besides this lack of a universal registration process, research into voter registration campaigns has shown that the following problems exist. For each problem, at least one solution is proposed.

Problems

1. People have **poor self- and political images.** ("I don't have the know-how to make a difference.")
2. People are **unaware of the needs and issues** in the community.
3. Voter registration drives are **nonpartisan and meaningless.**
4. **People are too busy** with day to day activities to register.
5. **Political parties and trade unions fail** to push voter registration drives.
6. **Minorities usually do not give elected officials very much credence.**
7. Many people are **unaware of** where to go and what to do in order to register to vote.
8. Voter registration drives are **poorly organized.**

Solutions

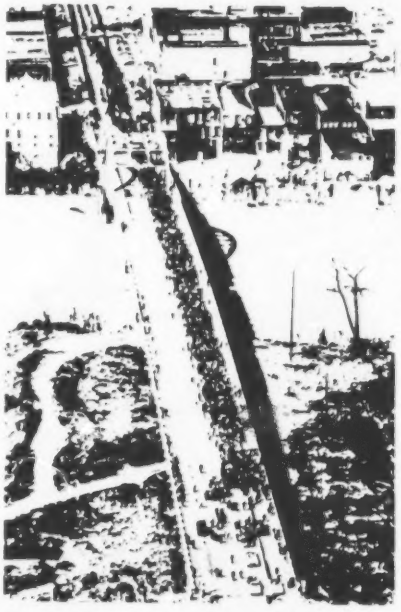
1. **Increase self-image;** show that individuals are not to blame for their conditions.
2. Educate people about their **community needs and issues.**
3. Make the voter registration drive a partisan issue; show people how **they can benefit** directly from the registration campaign by voting certain ways.
4. **Pressure people** to make time to register; provide transportation; pull 'em off the streets.
5. **Urge political party members and union officials** to encourage voter registration; give good press if they do help and bad press if they don't.
6. **Get people that the community respects** to urge people to register to vote.
7. **Use the media** to educate those you want to explain voter registration procedures to.
8. **Develop a well-organized voter registration drive;** be systematic and make the best use of your resources.



Getting Out the Vote: The Best Way To Contact People

It helps to learn what other groups have done. Research has shown that some methods of contacting people work better than others. Here is a summary of that research.

Individual door-to-door canvassing and information sharing in the South in the 60's . . .



. . . resulted in large marches such as the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

Door-to-Door Canvassing Works Better than Mail or Telephone

A study in Ann Arbor, Michigan, showed that, among "apathetic voters" (people who vote in national and state elections, but not local elections), door-to-door canvassing increased voter participation by 25% while mailed reminders brought in a much smaller 10% increase.

Another study showed that telephone canvassing resulted in less than a 1% increase among all eligible voters whereas door-to-door canvassing produced a 4.5% increase.

Many Contacts Work Better than Few Contacts

A study of a low-visibility, nonpartisan election in one Maryland community revealed that:

- –75% of those contacted four or more times (by the candidate, workers, flyers, mailed statements or phone calls) voted.
- –60% of those contacted one to three times voted.
- –40% of those not contacted at all voted.

The national study showed that if not canvassed, 27.9% will not vote. If canvassed, only 12.7% will not vote.

Target Your Efforts

As a general rule of thumb, to be effective you should concentrate on turning out the vote in neighborhoods likely to support the party or issues, and avoid contacting opposition voters.

Party Support Helps

In very close primary elections, the partisan effort made by the candidate's political party can swing a substantial number of votes even if the candidate is relatively unknown.

Strong party leadership at the local level is vital. If your party has a strong organization and the opposition doesn't, you can expect an extra 5% of the vote. If the opposing candidate has a good party organization and you don't, you will lose an extra 5% of the vote. Altogether, there can be a 10% difference!

This Planning Guide is designed to help you work through the voter registration process. It does so by helping you to answer six basic questions:

–**Why** do we wan to do a voter registration drive?

–**Whom** do we want to reach?

–**Where** do we want the voter registration drive to take place?

–**What** will we have to do?

–**How** will we do it? What are our resources? Who will do what?

–**When** will it happen?

Why Have a Voter Registration Drive?

Without specific, concerete, measurable purposes, any action loses its meaning. Think specifically: Why should our group want to have a voter registration drive?

–What benefits do we expect from it?

–Is another action more appropriate? Other actions might include direct-action organizing, setting up a coalition, etc.

If you are not sure your action is appropriate, do the following:

–Define the problem or issue that you want to solve.

–How can your issue be translated into political terms?

Here are some typical reasons why people launch voter registration drives. Check the one(s) that apply to you.

–to elect a specific candidate to office (because that candidate will help your group significantly more than the other candidates for office);

–to get rid of an official who's been standing in the way of needed reforms;

–to pass or defeat a referendum or initiative;

–to raise people's consciousness about a specific issue;

–to put pressure on government by making officials take notice;

–other

Who Do You Want to Register? Where Will the Voter Registration Drive Take Place?

Voter registration is potentially an empowering process. You should be very clear about which group or groups you want to reach.

–What people or group(s) do you want to empower?

–What has been the past voting pattern by these groups?

–Who are the leaders of these groups?

–How do people in the community feel about the problem you have defined?

–What other groups belong to your elected official's constituency?

–Where do these other people stand in regards to your issues? Are they for, against or uncertain?

If you are able to personalize your voter registration drive, that is, if you can determine the needs of those you want to reach, you will have better luck registering them. One way to do it is to "draw" a composite sketch of what the typical unregistered voter looks like. The following questions are essential to writing up such a composite:

–What are the person's age, sex and marital status?

–What are the person's interests? (How does he spend his time?)

–What are the target group's values? (What is important to the members? Why? How do they act on their values?)

–What are the important symbols, if any, to this group?

–What institutions do the people participate in?

–What issues do they consider most important, and how do they demonstrate their concern for these issues?

–How would the people benefit from a voter registration drive?

–What percentage of people need to register in order to create a significant force?

–Why haven't they registered before?

–What is it going to take to get them to register now?

Who Are Our Resources?

Below are listed some of the groups that typically get involved in voter registration drives. Which ones would be helpful to you? How would they be helpful?

Group	Possible resources	What we've got to do to involve them
League of Women Voters		
Churches		
Council of Churches		
Civic Groups 1. 2. 3. 4.		
Business groups 1. 2. 3.		
Social Services 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.		
Public interest groups PIRGs Common Cause		
Political parties		
Unions		
Community groups		

What? How? By Whom? By When?

What must be done	How it must be done	Who must do it	By when it must be done
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

Time line

Beginning ——————————————————— End

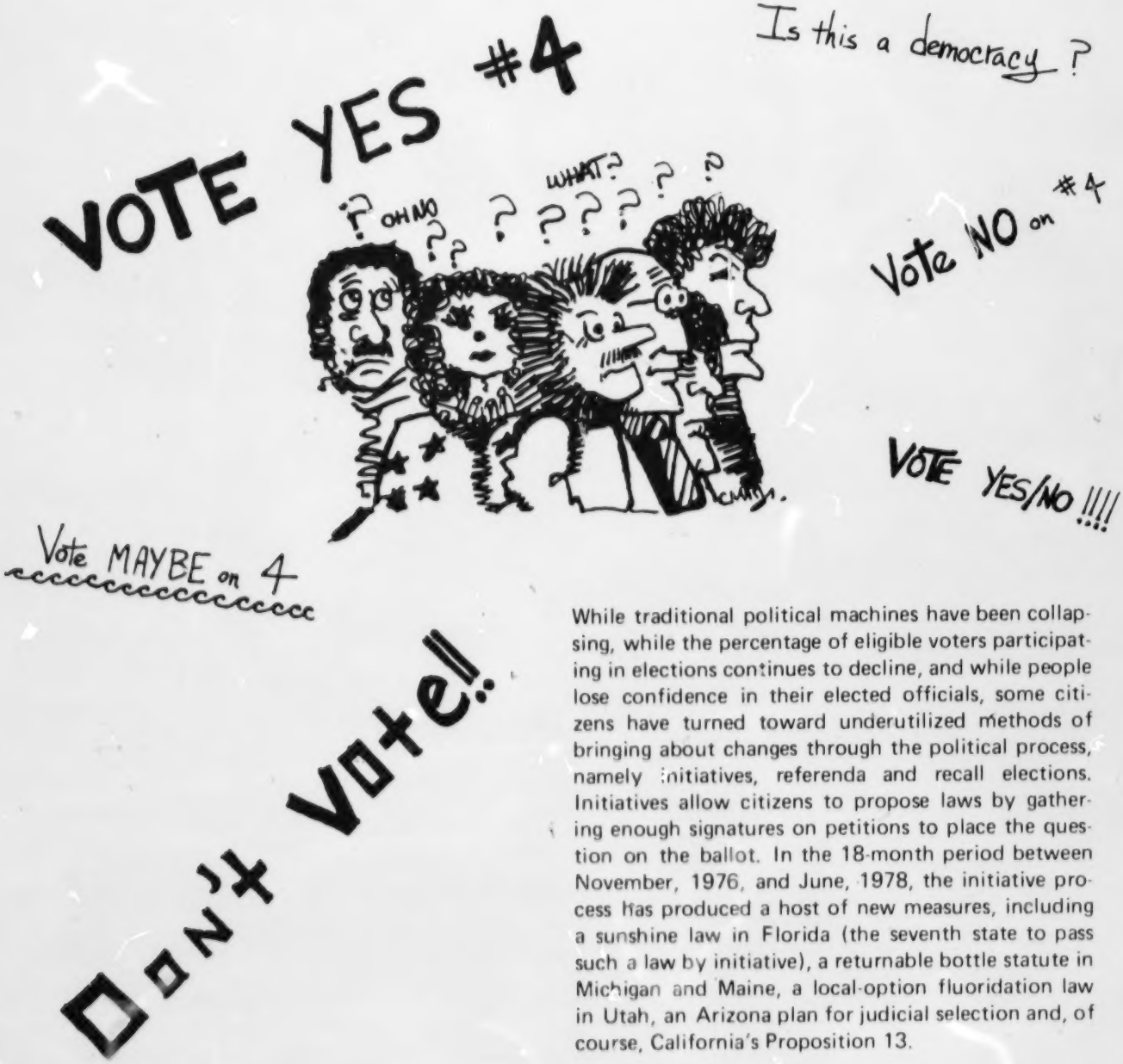
Role Plays and Simulations

1. Pick an issue in your community that deserves government attention, where a voter registration drive could pressure officials to deal with the issue. Draw up a composite of your community and its possible reactions to the selected issue, using the questions under "Whom Do You Want To Register?" of the "Voter Registration Planning Guide."

2. Using the list of problems and solutions in "Successes and Failures in Voter Registration," role play a dialogue between people working to register voters and those who, for various reasons, do not want to register to vote. Either pair off members or have two people go through the role playing with the others evaluating. Discuss the interviews to see which approaches worked and which did not.

3. Try designing brochures and public service announcements encouraging unregistered people in your community to vote. Use the information under "Whom Do You Want To Register" in this chapter as a guide.

Chapter 9
Initiatives, Referenda and Recalls



While traditional political machines have been collapsing, while the percentage of eligible voters participating in elections continues to decline, and while people lose confidence in their elected officials, some citizens have turned toward underutilized methods of bringing about changes through the political process, namely initiatives, referenda and recall elections. Initiatives allow citizens to propose laws by gathering enough signatures on petitions to place the question on the ballot. In the 18-month period between November, 1976, and June, 1978, the initiative process has produced a host of new measures, including a sunshine law in Florida (the seventh state to pass such a law by initiative), a returnable bottle statute in Michigan and Maine, a local-option fluoridation law in Utah, an Arizona plan for judicial selection and, of course, California's Proposition 13.

Referenda give citizens a chance to accept or reject laws already passed by the legislature. Several recent referenda (one in Wichita, Kansas, and another in St. Paul, Minnesota) have repealed gay rights ordinances.

Recalls allow citizens to remove officials from public office. Recent recall drives have seen four of five commissioners removed in Alamogorda, New Mexico, a district attorney almost removed in Pueblo City, New Mexico, and Mayor Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland keeping his job by a few hundred votes.

There are few limitations on initiatives, referenda and recalls. They can be done locally, in state representative or state senate districts, on a countywide basis or on a statewide basis. Currently, a group called Initiative America is exploring the possibility of developing nationwide initiatives.

Many people see the increased popularity of initiatives, referenda and recalls as a sign that people want a more direct influence in the governmental process. Proposition 13 advocates were often quoted as saying that they were "the voice of the people sending a message" to the state capitol. But others are quick to raise some serious questions.

The first question concerns who exactly is trying to send the message to the officials. The box below shows, for instance, how different groups voted for Proposition 13.

How Californians voted on Prop. 13

	percentage of YES votes
PARTY	
Republicans	78
Democrats	57
IDEOLOGY	
Liberals	45
Moderates	65
Conservatives	82
PROPERTY	
Owners	72
Renters	47
INCOME	
Under $8,000	55
$8,000-$15,000	67
$15,000-$25,000	68
Over $25,000	63
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES	
In Household	43
Not in Household	74
ETHNIC	
Blacks	42
Whites	67

Source: Los Angeles Times—Channel 2 survey

Another question raised is that of "big business" interests vs. "consumer" interests. Many initiatives have dealt with public ownership vs. private ownership (especially of utilities), consumer protection (bottle bills, flat electric rates) and graduated income taxes. Whenever big business sees its interests threatened, it becomes willing to spend considerable sums of money and resources to pass or (usually) defeat legislation and initiatives.

You should check statewide and local financial disclosure statistics in your area to see how true this is. In Massachusetts in 1976 there were seven initiatives on the ballot, many of them representing big business vs. consumer interests. It is clear that big business interests outspent consumer interests by wide margins.

But more than money was spent. According to some Massachusetts officials, employees of electric companies throughout the state were given election day off to man the polls with signs urging defeat of the public power and flat rate initiatives. The same

occurred with employees of beer and soft drink firms fighting the bottle bill. Deceptive advertisements paid for with lots of out-of-state money contributed to a narrow defeat for the bill.

Unless state and local campaign finance laws are passed that apply to initiative questions, any measures designed to curtail some of big business's power will have to fight the virtually unlimited financial resources behind the giant corporations.

Another problem with initiatives is that they are sometimes too complicated for people to understand. Care must be taken to choose issues with potential broad-based support that can be presented in an easy to comprehend manner.

Getting out the facts, being able to deal with media distortions, and good organizing appear to be the important factors in the success of initiatives. Even if everything comes together in your campaign, circumstances may conspire against you as they did for the proponents of the Massachusetts Bottle Bill initiative in 1976. Despite being outspent 2.3-1 by opponents funded with lots of out-of-state contributions, the well-organized, broad-based coalition in support of the bill seemed to be upon the verge of victory. However, four of the six other initiatives on the ballot (graduated income tax, flat rates for electricity, public power authority and gun control) were fought so heavily by vested interests that an overwhelming negative reaction to all the initiative questions was created. When the final tally was in, the Bottle Bill had lost by less than 1% of the vote, when it certainly would have passed under any other circumstances. Even a totally non-controversial measure to allow absentee voting for those with religious holidays on election days barely passed.

Although you might lose a close one, try not to become too discouraged, since statistically the chances of victory the first time around for an initiative are not particularly encouraging. This does not mean, however, that you should not work hard on an issue for, despite the possibility of defeat, coalition building, consciousness raising and increased awareness of the political system are beneficial by-products whether you win or lose.

SPENDING AND VOTING PATTERNS
1976 Mass. General Elections
Initiatives/Referenda

Initiative or Referendum No.	Issue	Money Spent For	Money Spent Against	Vote For	Vote Against	Spending Ration (Pro:Con)
no. 1	Ratification of Equal Rights Amendment	$127,067.73	$816.00	1,425,607	933,516	155:1
no. 2	Graduated Income Tax Rates	$8,706.34	$197,811.52	642,091	1,720,678	1:22.7
no. 3	Absentee Voting For Religious Reasons			1,285,353	1,039,756	
no. 4	Massachusetts Power Authority	$ 019.85	$649,000.50	344,471	1,971,385	1:321
no. 5	Banning of Private Handguns	$40,878.60	$274,013.83	733,418	1,662,216	1:7.5
no. 6	Bottle Bill	$59,279.34	$1,368,195.77	1,261,579	1,220,722	1:23
no. 7	Uniform	$210,401.08	$570,522.15	605,709	1,786,093	1:2.7
	Total	$448,352.94	$3,065,354.60			

based on information gathered from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance

Planning Guide

About the Purposes

–What issues do you want to put in front of the public?

–What changes might you be able to bring about? Are the changes worth the effort?

–What geographical area do you want to include? Do you think a majority of the people from the entire geographical area will support your initiative, referendum or recall?

Legal Requirements (This information can be obtained from your secretary of state's office.)

–How many signatures do you need?

–What are the filing requirements and deadlines?

–Are there any restrictions on who is allowed to solicit the signatures?

–Are there any other legal requirements that you must know about?

Strategies

–Why might people in the geographical area vote your way on the issue? What would they gain? lose?

–Why might they vote against the issue? What would they gain? lose?

–Who will your opposition be?

–What do you know about the opposition?

–What resources do they have?

–How have they dealt with initiatives or other political issues before?

–How have they dealt with this issue before?

–What chances do you think you have of winning? Why do you feel this way?

–What commitments will you need from people?

–What help do you need from the media?

–What organizational support will you need to develop?

Organizational Questions

After answering the questions below, fill in the time line, determining what must happen, by whom and when in order to have a successful campaign.

	What must be done	By whom	By when
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Today — Election Day

—How will you organize yourselves to hold yourselves accountable?

Role Play

The residents in your state are extremely concerned about high property taxes. Two coalitions have jumped to the forefront, both proposing state initiatives that claim to cut property taxes considerably. Much media activity has already taken place. The two groups are about to hold a major televised debate on the issue one week before the election. Participants are to divide into four groups:

1. the proponents of Initiative I (at least three people)
2. the proponents of Initiative II (at least three people)
3. media person/moderator
4. audience questioners (as many as desired)

IF YOU ARE GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS ROLE PLAY, CHOOSE A PERSON TO COORDINATE IT, AND DO NOT READ BEYOND THIS PARAGRAPH. THE COORDINATOR WILL HAND OUT INDIVIDUAL ROLES. BOTH GROUPS SHOULD REFER TO "CHAPTER 2" FOR INFORMATION ABOUT TAXES.

Initiative I proponents. Using the information in "Chapter 2" and any other information you can gather as a guide, try to write a tax bill that would equalize property tax payments for all citizens.

Person No. 1: You are a member of a human services coalition. You don't want tax cuts to hurt low-income people or those that work with low-income people.

Person No. 2: You are a member of a progressive union. You don't want taxes to hurt working class, under-employed or unemployed people.

Person No. 3: You belong to a statewide public interest group consisting primarily of students.

Initiative II proponents. You want to develop a tax bill that will keep the status quo in your state, while at the same time making it look as though you are concerned about the welfare of everyone in the state. You will probably have to play upon the fears of people. Your group is a wealthy group that wants in reality to keep major business from being taxed. You may want to develop ties with the media as soon as possible.

Sequence of Events

1. Read role, research and put together your initiative. Use "Chapter 2" and other information you may have on property taxes. Also put out press release stating your initiative position and plan debate.

Audience prepares questions to ask the debaters.

Media person attends sessions, interviews people.

Time: 30-45 minutes

2. Media person puts out newspaper articles, including releases provided by the two groups.

Time: 5 minutes

3. Debate (you set the rules) with considerable time for questions from the audience.

Time: 30-45 minutes

4. Media person reads an endorsement of the group he wants to support.

Time: 5 minutes

5. The audience votes at the polls.

Chapter 10
Role Play: Accountability Organizing

Role playing provides participants with the chance to practice working within the political process. Role playing is fun and high energy, and provides people with data on themselves.

I like to interrupt the role playing situation periodically to ask participants to think about how they are approaching people and how their strategies are working out. This gives people a chance to try a more productive approach or strategy.

Note that the role play deals with economic as well as social service and community issues. The attempt here was to allow people to think in terms of dealing with root causes and see coalitions as an important and useful strategy.

The role play can be used to generate data to which the specific exercises in the manual can then be applied. If this role play is not particularly relevant to you, why not design your own?

Following the role play "Scenario" is a "Process Checklist." Participants should use it as a guide as they go about the business of holding "candidates" and the elected "mayor" accountable to the needs of the "citizens."

Decide for yourself which roles may be filled; the more, the merrier.

Spend an adequate time after the role play processing what went on—what was done well, what needed to be improved.

Scenario

Berkshire City is a small city (population 35,000) in western Massachusetts. Like other cities in that part of the state, its industry is moving elsewhere because management claims that labor is less expensive elsewhere. The consequences for Berkshire City are increased property taxes and higher unemployment.

Of some relief to the city will be its share of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies in June of 1978. The city is scheduled to receive 1.5 million dollars from the federal government for this grant, but the mayor is undecided as to how she will spend the money. According to federal regulations, up to 20% of that money can usually be spent for human services, but local business leaders feel that all the money should be spent on brick and mortar types of programs to keep the city presentable for tourists and new industry. A major proposal of business is to use CDBG monies to build a 1.3 million dollar parking lot in the downtown area, near a major industry.

Human services people, on the other hand, feel that there should be a commitment by the city to deal with the "less fortunate." The existing mayor has mentioned that she feels a human services agency, to be established with CDBG monies, under city government would best coordinate and deal with human services problems, but she gave no indication as to what that agency might look like. It will not be set up until the first of 1978. Human services professionals want to make that agency more responsive to people's needs. They have decided to make the agency an issue in the upcoming elections, but need the support of other forces to be able to do so effectively.

Labor appears to be the most likely group with which to coalesce, because it has traditionally supported government responsiveness to social services. However, initial meetings between human services and labor have shown some disagreement about the role of human services. Some labor officials feel that human service agencies have become "mop up" agencies, have not provided people with well-paying jobs, but have in actuality made unemployment easier to cope with.

Human services, on the other hand, say that, if labor were less concerned with pay raises and more concerned with meaningful work and with hiring young people, human problems and the need for human services would be significantly reduced.

Although these differences exist, both groups hope that a mutual plan can be worked out. The groups plan to cosponsor a human needs public hearing to determine what the human services priorities should be. If the hearing can come up with joint analysis of the problems, they will be written as a human services platform, and candidates for mayor will be asked to respond to the platform. Based on their responses, report cards will be put out on the candidates, and human services and labor members will endorse the candidate with the best report card. Whoever is elected will be monitored closely to make sure that he or she follows through on campaign promises.

Scene I: The Public Hearing

20-30 minutes

Can we agree on the issues?

July 1, 1977

Human services officials, together with local labor unions, will hold a public hearing to determine what kinds of human needs the city has and what kinds of services the city's human services department should set up. If there is enough agreement on specific issues, the two groups will cosponsor a labor/human services platform.

Scene II: Writing the Platform

10-20 minutes

Can we write a platform that the public can rally around?

August 15-September 1, 1977

Representatives from human services and labor break into groups around interest categories to put together a platform. The platform must be written to reflect both the priorities of human services and the priorities of labor. The platform must also be written so as not to alienate the public. It must be written so as to be able to distinguish one candidate from another. **The platform should list specific changes in local legislation or policy that best carry out your concerns.** Each small group should elect one person to be questioner at the candidate evening.

Scene III: The Candidate Evening

10-20 minutes

Can we find out where the candidates stand?

October 12, 1977

Representatives of labor and human services will quiz each of three candidates concerning candidates' stands on the human services issues. Each questioner will be allowed two minutes to elicit a response from each candidate.

Scene IV: The Report Card

20 minutes

October 18-November 7, 1977

Evaluate and compile the results of the hearing and tally. The candidate receiving the highest mark gets the endorsement of the group.

Scene V: Elections

November 8, 1977

Get out and vote for your favorite candidate!

A Process Checklist: Accountability

I. **Who We Are: Developing a Coalition Around an Issue**

A. The **topic** of concern is

B. In order to adequately **define the problem** and **develop an organization** that will have adequate clout, we'll **need the following groups/individuals:**

	groups/individuals	what they have to offer
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

(use another page for more names. Remember, you'll need enough commitments to be successful. How many should that be?)

C. The best way to get people to define the issue would be to:

	benefits	hindrances
1. hold public hearing		
2. hold a meeting/meetings		
3. mail out questionnaires		
4. do phone interviews		

II. **What We Want: Developing a Platform**

A. **Problem definition** (from the results of I:C)

problems	root causes	ideal situation	specific legislative/bureaucratic change
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
etc.			

B. Organizing **platform planks**

(Platform planks are specific ways to get from the problem to the ideal situation. This process may take considerable time.)

Plank No. 1

a. general statement (ideal) (for example, "All children have a right to adequate education."):

b. statement of the problem (including root cause) (for example, "42% of high-school-age people drop out of school because they feel school to be irrelevant."):

c. statement of specific change in legislation/policy (for example, "We propose an ongoing alternative high school as part of the permanent school system."):

Plank No. 2

a. general statement:

b. statement of the problem:

c. statement of specific change in legislation/policy:

Plank No. 3

a. general statement:

b. statement of the problem:

c. statement of specific change in legislation/policy:

Plank No. 4

a. general statement:

b. statement of the problem:

c. statement of specific change in legislation/policy:

Plank No. 5

a. general statement:

b. statement of the problem:

c. statement of specific change in legislation/policy:

III. **Whom We Want It From: Targeting the Candidates**

The changes that we propose dictate that we deal with the candidates for the following offices:

office	**changes required (II.B.c.)**	**names of candidates for office**

IV. **What They Say They'll Do: Quizzing the Candidates**

A. Commitment to **Participate**

name	filled out questionnaire	met with group to discuss issues	attended candidate evening

B. Scorecard/Report Card

		yes	no	qualification (state)
Candidate A	General Statement:			
	Plank No. 1			
	Plank No. 2			
	Plank No. 3			
	Plank No. 4			
	Plank No. 5			
Candidate B	General Statement:			
	Plank No. 1			
	Plank No. 2			
	Plank No. 3			
	Plank No. 4			

V. Monitoring Elected Officials: Making Sure They'll Do What They Promised

	steps official would take to follow through	my organization's monitor	method of monitoring	date
Commitment 1				
Commitment 2				
Commitment 3				
Commitment 4				
Commitment 5				
Commitment 6				
Commitment 7				
Commitment 8				

Checklist: Holding Elected Officials Accountable

	yes	no	maybe
1. Have I become well acquainted with the person? Do I know what he stand for?			
2. Am I in close contact with the person?			
3. Am I well acquainted with the issue? If the issue is a bill, do I know the bill, do I know the bill number? Its implications?			
4. Have I let the official know specifically what it is I want, and what I'll do if I don't get it? Does what I'll do pose a significant threat?			
5. Do I know much background on the official? Do I know where he gets major campaign contributions? (This is public information.) Do I know what lobbyists influence or try to influence him? (also public information)			
6. Have I offered to help the elected official do what I want him to do? Am I prepared to support?			
7. Have I congratulated the official for previous good work?			
8. Have I utilized all chances to speak out on the subject myself, such as speaking at public hearings?			
9. Am I prepared to act if the official does not follow through as promised?			
10. Have I begun to meld a coalition that can follow through on needed action? Has the coalition been tested?			
11. Have I used the media as well as I could? Are the media supportive (Are they doing editorials, etc.)?			
12. Other			
13. Other			

Chapter 11 Resources

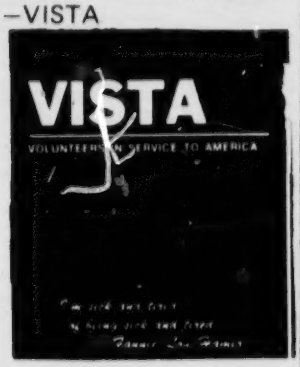
Community Resources

Groups who want to make changes in the political process need to have allies. Following is a list of groups that exist in many cities and town. Use this as a brainstorming list to help you identify groups that may help you in your activity. Once you have identified resources, list them according to your priorities so that you can reach the groups important to you first.

This list is by no means a complete list. Feel free to add groups as you see fit.

"Alternative" Groups
- –alternative energy groups
- –alternative health care groups
- –alternative food groups

Antipoverty
- –Community Services Agency (former Office of Economic Opportunity)
- –Food Stamp programs
- –VISTA



Children and Youth
- –day care centers
- –schools
- –alternative schools
- –tutorial programs
- –scouts
- –YMCA, YWCA
- –4-H

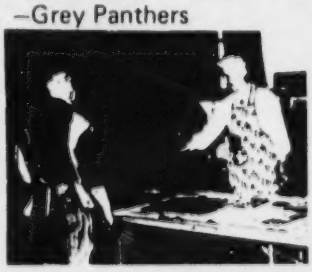
Economic/Business
- –cooperatives
- –Chamber of Commerce
- –Community Development Corporations
- –small business associations
- –taxpayers' association

Civic and Fraternal
- –Elks
- –Knights of Columbus
- –Masons
- –Shriners
- –women's clubs
- –sororities
- –fraternities
- –community organizations and improvement groups
- –neighborhood centers
- –Block clubs
- –Kiwonas
- –Rotary
- –Lions Clubs

Consumer
- –Public Interest Research Groups
- –Attorney General's Office
- –Better Business Bureau

Education
- –PTA/PTO
- –Teachers' Associations
- –Teachers' Unions
- –college and university volunteers
- –parent advisory councils

Elderly
- –Councils on Aging
- –Grey Panthers



Housing
- –tenant unions
- –housing assistance offices
- –Housing Authorities
- –cooperatives

Legal
- – legal services
- –court reform groups
- –prison reform groups
- –local Bar Association
- –Legal Aid Society
- –anti-crime programs

Media
- –local television
- –national television
- –cable television
- –community access television
- –local radio stations
- –ham radio operators
- –local newspapers
- –community newspapers
- –trade newspapers
- –neighborhood newspapers
- –special newspapers
- –church newsletters
- –organization newsletters
- –school newspapers
- –League of Women Voters newsletters
- –political party newsletters

Minority
- –bicultural programs
- –Urban League
- –cultural enrichment programs
- –cultural centers

Planning
- –state Planning Department
- –county Planning Department
- –city/town Planning Departments
- –Conservation Commission

Recreation Programs
- –park and recreation programs
- –league sport programs

Religious
- –Council of Churches
- –church men's groups
- –church women's groups
- –chruch youth groups
- –clergy associations
- –church councils, vestries, etc.
- –state church groups
- –national church groups
- –urban ministries groups

INSIGHT 70's

Community Counseling Center
71 Sumner Avenue
Springfield, MA.
732-2553

Social Services
- –abuse and neglect programs
- –adoption agencies
- –agencies for the blind
- –alcoholism programs
- –Alcoholics Anonymous
- –boys and girls clubs
- –counseling and mental health programs
- –child welfare programs
- –children's councils
- –area agencies on aging
- –drug and alcohol detoxification programs
- –CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) programs
- –drug treatment and prevention programs
- –emergency shelter programs
- –employment agencies
- –family service programs
- –foster care agencies
- –genetics couseling programs
- –Goodwill Industries
- –Homecare Corporations
- –hospitals
- –Hotlines
- –health programs
- –health clinics
- –health planning councils
- –handicapped programs
- –libraries
- –learning disabilities programs
- –lung associations
- –March of Dimes
- –mental retardation programs
- –mental health planning and advisory programs
- –multiple sclerosis programs
- –muscular dystrophy programs
- –on-the-job training programs
- –Planned Parenthood/ family planning
- –RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer program)
- –rape prevention programs
- –Salvation Army
- –sight-impairment programs
- –therapeutic communities
- –Vista
- –Visiting Nurse Association
- –Welfare programs
- –Welfare advisory programs
- –youth employment programs

Unions
(List the unions in your area.)

Watchdog/Good Government Programs
- –Common Cause
- –League of Women Voters
- –American Association of University Women
- –statewide watchdog groups
- –legislative committees of various groups mentioned on this page

Newsletters

Alternative Sources of Energy
Rte 2
Milaca, Minnesota, 56353

Public bimonthly magazine on appropriate technologies.

Cooperative Housing Bulletin
1828 L St. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20036

This is a newsletter of the National Association of Housing Cooneratives. It provides up-to-date information on issues affecting housing.

Dollars and Sense
324 Somerville Ave.
Somerville, Ma., 02143

A monthly bulletin of economic affairs written by a group of progressive economists, it is one of the best sources of up-to-date information on the economy.

In These Times
1509 North Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, Illinois, 60622

This weekly newspaper regularly reports on progressive political officials, union struggles and progressive issues abroad.

Journal of Appropriate Technology
RAIN
2270 N.W. Irving
Portland, Oregon, 97210

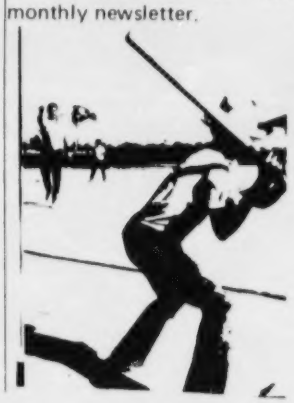
The **Journal** provides information on economics, communications, health, energy and community building.

New Roots
P.O. Box 459
Amherst, Ma. 01002

Designed especially for the northeast part of the United States, New Roots provides articles and infomation to encourage networking among appropriate technology groups, mobilization around issues, as well as to develop a forum to discuss appropraite technology issues.

People and Taxes
Public Citizen Tax Reform Research Group
113 C Street, S.C.
Washington, D.C., 20003

If you are working on or concerned about tax issues, you should subscribe to this monthly newsletter.



Organizations

The Power Line
Environmental Action Foundation
724 Dupont Circle Building
Washington, D.C., 20036

This is a monthly newsletter for utility activists. It reports on current news on the electric utility industry with emphasis on citizen challenges. Frequent topics are nuclear power, rate structure reform, rate increases and public power.

The Public Works
Commuunity Ownership Organizing Project
349 62nd St.
Oakland, Ca.

This is a free newsletter about community ownership of institutions, including utilities. It also provides a number of technical studies.

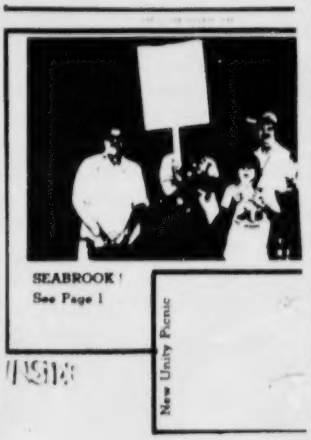
Self-Reliance
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
1717 18th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20009

This useful publication reports on the efforts of communities across the country to become more self-sufficient and politically independent. The Institute also publishes a variety of studies on waste management, urban farming, solar energy, city-owned financial institutions and neighborhood government.

Ways and Means
Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies
1901 Q St., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20009

This newsletter, published by the Conference, provides regular information on progressive legislation and programs at the state and local level. It is the best source of information on alternative policies for state and local government.

Washington Newsletter
Friends Committee on National Legislation
245 Second St., N.E.
Washington, D.C., 20002



Center for Community Change
1000 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20007

The Center provides information on a large number of issues affecting low- and moderate-income people, including public banks, neighborhood reinvestment, community housing, etc.

Common Cause
2030 M St., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20036

Common Cause, a public lobby, has chapters in most states and concerns itself with both statewide and national issues. Common Cause people are well versed in the political process and should be contacted for ideas and possible support. They also have valuable written materials.

Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies
1901 Q St., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20009
(202) 234-9382

If you are trying to develop workable political options in your community or state, this group may be the single most important group for you to know. This national organization of progressive state and local public officials and community leaders is wroking to develop innovative and forward-looking proposals for state and local government. Their annual conferences, usually held in the summers, are invaluable for ideas and support. They have a wide variety of publications and publish a bimonthly newsletter (See **Ways + Means** listed under "Newsletters.")

Democratic Party/Republican Party

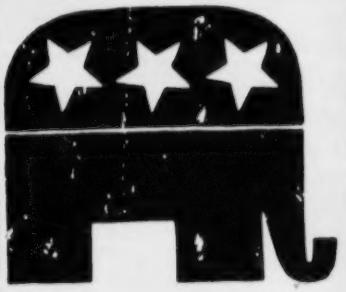
Local and statewide chapters of these parties can provide you with people resources, written materials and a good general understanding of who's who and what's what in your area. Most chapters are looking for members.

League of Women Voters
(See phone book for local League office.)

Leagues of Women Voters exist in every large city and in many towns across the country. Their knowledge of the political process is invaluable to any citizen group, and most Leauges are extremely eager to work with citizen groups around public issues. The League also has extensive written materials.

Public Interest Research Groups

Many states have Public Interest Research Groups, Nader-styled, Nader-affiliated consumer and public policy groups. These groups are also versed in the political process and can be good groups to coalesce with around public issues.



Economic Resources

The Community Ownership Organizing Project (COOP)
6529 Telegraph Avenue
San Francisco, Ca., 94609

COOP is an economic consulting group which works with public officials, community groups and unions on economic analysis of community development projects, including cooperatively owned and run housing developments and business enterprises. It is a key group to contact in looking for technical assistance in developing proposals for economic development projects.

Center for Community Economic Development (CCED)
639 Mass Ave., Suite 316
Cambridge, Ma., 02139
(617) 547-9695

CCED is an excellent resource for publications, analysis and assistance for those interested in community economic development corporations.

Cooperative League USA (CLUSA)
1828 L St., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20036
(202) 872-20036

The League is the main trade association of producer and consumer cooperatives. Contact the League for extensive publications list and information on the Coop Bank.

Science Resources

Center for Science in the Public Interest
1755 S Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20009

Peace Conversion

Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy
120 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C., 20002

The Coalition brings together 40 national religious, public interest, labor and professional organizations working on budget priorities, disarmament and human rights. Available materials include action guides, slide shows, speakers, legislative updates and background resources.

Alternative/Appropriate Technology Resources

Institute for Local Self-Reliance
1717 18th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20009

A non-profit educational and research organization formed to redefine urban neighborhoods and cities as increasingly self-reliant, productive systems to teach people the tools of self-reliance and to investigate the legal power for municipal decentralization.

Tax Resources

Public Citizen Tax Reform Research Group
133 C St., S.E.
Washington, D.C., 20003

(This is a Nader group that works on national, state and local tax reform issues.)

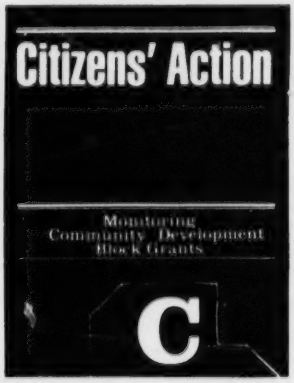
Books

Action for a Change: A Student's Manual for Public Interest Organizing

Ralph Nader and Donald Ross
Grossman
New York
1971

A Bill Becomes a Law

Daniel M. Berman
MacMillan Co.
New York
1966

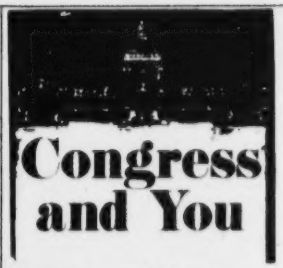


Citizen's Action Guide: Monitoring Community Development Block Grants

Center for Community Change
Washington, D.C.
1975

Community Guide

League of Women Voters
League of Women Voters Educational Fund
Washington, D.C.
1975



Congress and You

Donald C. Bacon
The American Association of Univeristy Women
Washington, D.C.,
1969

Congress Makes a Law

Stephen K. Bailey
Columbia University Press
New York
1950

The Dance of Legislation

Eric Redman
Simon and Shuster
New York
1973

The Disconnected

Penn Kimball
Columbia University Press
1972

Does the Citizen Stand a Chance? Politics of a State Legislature: New York

Peter A. Berle
Barron's Educational Inc.
Inc.
New York
1974

Election Campaign Handbook

Daniel M. Gaby and Merle H. Treusch
Prentice Hall Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
1976

Freedom: Then, Now and Tomorrow

Department of History and College of the Liberal Arts
Pennsylvania State University
1975

The Green Grass Roots

League of Women Voters of Michigan
Lansing
1978

How to Win at Politics

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Boston
1973

Lobbying in the Public Interest

The Grantsmanship Center News
Los Angeles
1976

Obstacle Course of Capitol Hill

Robert Bendiner
McGraw Hill
New York
1964

The Politics of Local and State Government

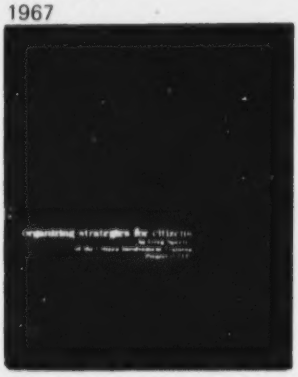
Duane Lockhard
MacMillan Co.
New York
1963

Political Influence: A New Theory of Urban Politics

Edward Banfield
Free Press
New York
1961

Politics of Poverty

James G. Donovan
Pegasus
New York
1967



Power: A Repossession Manual

Greg L. Speeter
Citizen Involvement Training Project
Amherst, Ma.
1978

Power Quotient Bag

Legislative Program Committee
American Association of University Women
Washington, D.C.
1970

Sample Outline of Legislative Hearings

Midwest Academy
Chicago
1973

Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City

Robert Dahl
Yale Press
New Haven
1961

Citizens and citizen groups often find themselves in the political arena face to face with powerful private interests.

For many of these citizens and citizen groups, involvement in the political process is like the neighborhood touch football team taking on the Super Bowl champs. The "little guys" are inexperienced, disorganized, short on size and resources – no match for the power, strength and savvy of the pros, the strong private interests.

Throughout the country, some citizen "teams" are beginning to pose significant threats to the way the powerful private interests play their game. These citizen groups are winning victories through creative, well analyzed organizing strategies, strategies that build on the strength of public concern for the public interest, strategies that take away the private interest's homefield advantage and force them to "play their game our way" . . . a major step toward government "of, by and for the people."

This manual is intended as a training manual, to help citizens and citizen groups develop clout. It begins by helping readers develop a working theory of the political process (an understanding of how the game is really played, and who really wins and loses) and then presents a series of "plays" – strategies and techniques to help put them on a par with the opposition. Some of the methods include: holding government agencies accountable, researching elected officials, developing report cards on candidates and elected officials, lobbying, and organizing initiatives, referenda and recalls. Case studies show how other "citizen teams" were able to win in the political process. Planning guides and role plays throughout the manual help citizens "get in shape" and carefully analyze the ways to "play their game our way."

". . . an essential tool to help those concerned with upgrading the level and expectations of government. . . . Frank, bold, realistic, . . . may tend to startle one's opinion of our legislative process – it's important that that happen. . . . A much more useful and pragmatic tool than what you'll find in traditional 'good government' publications."

Rick Roche, Springfield Representative,
Massachusetts State Legislature

". . . explains a very complicated process in easy-to-understand terms. . . . Very realistic, provides some creative answers for citizen groups, a valuable tool for any group that is involved in the political process.

Irene Kimball
Grass roots political organizer

As a community organizer for 12 years, Greg Speeter has worked with a number of community groups in using the political process to meet public needs. Some of those include the "Children's Campaign, '74," a political campaign to hold candidates for Massachusetts state offices accountable to children's needs; voter registration efforts in low income communities; working with citizen groups in lobbying on local, state and federal levels for a variety of issues. He has been a consultant for progressive candidates running for public office.

With CITP, Speeter has developed a process called Accountability Organizing as a training tool for individuals and groups who want to hold public officials or agencies accountable to community needs. He has written a previous manual for CITP, **Power, A Repossession Manual**, for community organizers and community organizations. Prior to coming to CITP, he wrote the **Children's Yellow Pages**, a resource manual for those organizing around children and youth issues.